

*Servant of God, well done, well hast thou fought
 The better fight, who since hast maintain'd, —
 Against revolted multitudes, the cause
 Of truth, in word mightier than they in Arms:
 And for the testimony of Truth hast born —
 Universal reproach; far worse to bear —
 Than violence: for this was all thy care
 To stand approv'd in sight of God, tho worlds —
 Judg'd thee perverse.*

*The Divine Spirit ma-
 nifested in the Life
 & Actions of this
 Lady, moved se-
 veral Persons to
 renounce the
 world and to
 endeavour to
 become true
 Christians, as
 may be seen
 in y^e account
 of her Life and
 Writings, & there
 are several per-
 sons now living, in
 divers places and
 Countrys, y^e are great*



*admirers of her Wri-
 tings, which tend to
 awaken those that
 read them with
 humility, and
 do not censure
 somethings con-
 tain'd in them,
 which may ap-
 pear strange
 to those that
 are strangers
 to and utterly
 unworthy of
 that divine Illu-
 mination which
 she enjoyed from
 Purity of Heart.*

*Christians I have sought from my Nativity: —
 I liv'd, I wrote, to shew how such to be: —
 Convinc'd the World of errors, Sins abuses: —
 All hate me for't each one my Name traduces.
 To death they persecute me every where: —
 How should I other lot than JESUS bear.*

*M^{rs} Bourignon was born at Lisle in Flanders 1616 & Died at
 Franeker in West Friesland 1680 after having liv'd an heavenly
 Life upon Earth. Her Character is seen the best in her Writings.*

THE
RENOVATION
OF THE
Gospel Spirit.

PART the First.

The Truth, which is in Jesus, consists in that ye forsake your former Life, the old Man, which is wholly corrupted, following the Wills and Passions of the Deceitfulness of the Heart; That ye be renewed by the Spirit, in the supream Part of your Soul; And that ye put on the new Man, which was created by God, in the Righteousness and Purity of the Truth. St. Paul to the Eph. c. iv. v. 21, 22, &c.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have no more Respect to the Flesh, to give it that which it desires. Rom. cap. xiii. v. 14.

By ANTOINETTE BOURIGNON.

Translated from the French.

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THE
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OF THE
FIRST PART,

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THE

THE
RENOVATION
OF THE
Gospel-Spirit.

The First PART.

[That it may appear how necessary it is to be renew'd by the Gospel-Spirit, here is discover'd the great Corruption of our Nature, which appears in all its Ways, in the Thoughts, Judgment and Opinion that it has of itself, still following its own Will, and the great Deceitfulness of the Man's Heart which knows not itself in any Thing; but thinks that it loves God, and is virtuous, when it seeks only to satisfy the Inclinations and Pleasures of corrupt Nature, to which even the Learned of this Age have accommodated their Doctrine, and perverted the Law of Christ, which we ought to obey in mortifying the Flesh and its Lusts, even tho' a Man should desire only to lessen his Damnation; how much more if we desire to be saved by the RENOVATION OF THE GOSPEL-SPIRIT? The Reader in perusing this Letter ought rather to think upon himself, than on the

Person to whom it was occasionally written: For without Doubt every one will find in himself the like Corruption as to its Essence, and perhaps far greater.]

My Friend,

§. 1. Perceive, the Devil disturbs your Mind by diverse Temptations, to which you give too easy Entrance, because you are ignorant of his Devices and of the great Corruption of your NATURE. You think you do well, when you do very ill. And if you continue thus to follow your own Will, it is to be feared, the Devil will hurry you on to many Misfortunes.

§. 2. God has so favorably provided for you here, both as to Soul and Body, that you could no where have better Conveniences both for your temporal and spiritual Infirmities; and yet instead of blessing God continually for this, you are displeas'd with many Things, and cannot well tell yourself what you would be at. For when you was at *Hamburg*, you wish'd so earnestly to be here, that you would have been willing to lie in a Stable, if there had been no other Accommodation for you. And now when you have here a very good Chamber, you are not satisfied with it, but would have another: And tho' this other is furnished with all Conveniencies for an aged or infirm Person, with a Stove for the Winter, and is the Ground-Floor, so that there is no need of going up or down Stairs for any Thing you want; yet before you enter'd into it, you said the Windows must be made higher, that you might breathe the more freely, tho' the Room is abundantly high, and the Prospect sufficient, answerable to the Largeness of the Place. So that without Doubt you will still find some other Thing to complain of, since you seek to satisfy corrupt Nature, which of itself is insatiable,

Part I. the GOSPEL-SPIRIT. II

lent, insatiable, never content nor satisfied, desiring always what it has not, and never pleased even with the Abundance which it hath. This makes you still desire what you have not, tho' formerly you thought you could be contented with Bread and Beer, provided you were living in the Society of good People. And now you are in a quiet Place, with Persons of Virtue and Integrity, who do not treat you as one of the Poor of the Hospital, but as their Brother, doing you all manner of Kindness and Service, you are not satisfied, but still you would have more Service, and Conveniencies, and you murmur if they are not with you Night and Day, doing you such Services, as may gratify your Corruption and sensual Appetites. For otherwise our Bretheren serve you in all Things necessary for your Infirmary, which is not so great as to oblige them to watch with you by Night, or to be always by you. For your Disease lies rather in your Imagination (which Satan disturbs that he may vex us) than in any Feverishness, or other Malady purely natural.

§. 3. But you do not perceive this, because the Blindness of your Self-Love, which believes that it deserves all the Ease and Service which corrupt Nature covets, and thinks it is wrong'd, if it get not the best and most pleasant Things in Nature: Whereas this Corruption ought to reckon itself unworthy of a Crumb of Bread, or a Glass of Beer: Since by its Sins it is become God's Enemy, and has so often despised his Commandments: Therefore it deserves not to taste the good and pleasant Things, which God created for his Children only, and not for Rebels, as all those are who chuse to follow the Motion of their own CORRUPT NATURE as much as possible. Therefore you ought not only to be satisfied with what is done and given to you here, but even to reckon your-

self very happy to be lodg'd in such a Place, since you acknowledge that you was very hardly used by your nearest Relations, who would let you have nothing without Money, and not very honestly neither.

§. 4. How strange is your Ingratitude ! who will not be pleased with the Services which our Brethren render you out of Charity, without being obliged to it ; for they want neither your Mony nor your Person ; for all of us have enough of this World's Goods, wherewith to procure the Service of others, if Christ had not told us (*a*), *that he came not to be served, but to serve* ; and they are desirous, as much as is possible, to labour to imitate such a Master, who has painted out to them the servile Way of Humility and Lowliness.

§. 5. But you seem to condemn all these Things, coveting Wealth, and being desirous to spend the little Money you have in getting others to serve and attend you. This is quite contrary to Christian Perfection, which is contented with what is purely necessary, and even reckons itself unworthy of that. But you imagine you deserve great Things ; because Men esteem you Virtuous, tho' really you are not so ; for if you had one Grain of Humility of Heart, you would judge yourself unworthy of the least Service that our Brethren do you ; nay, tho' it were done you by the meanest Person in the World. But because you do not know wherein true Virtue consists, you think you are Humble, while you esteem yourself worthy of all Accommodations and Services ; and you think it Prudence, to desire to be well treated and provided for.

(*a*) *Matth. xx. 28.*

§. 6. Therefore you say, *That Maids must be had to do the meaner Offices, since these do not become Men*: As if naturally Men had not so much Strength as Women; tho' indeed Men have more robust Bodies than they. But Pride will not suffer Men to do mean and servile Offices, tho' *Jesus Christ*, that true Man, served his Parents, and did the meanest Offices of the House till he was thirty Years of Age; for the Scripture speaks nothing of him until this Age, except, *That he was subject to his Parents*. Now, a truly obedient Son will not let his Father or Mother wash the Dishes, clean the House, or do any other mean and servile Work, while he is present. For this would be great Rudeness (such as could not be in *Jesus Christ*) if a Son should make his Father and Mother serve him: Whence it appears that Christ did not disdain, all his Lifetime, to do mean and servile Offices.

§. 7. But because you are desirous of the Ease and Conveniences of corrupt Nature, you think it were fitter that I should take in Maids to serve us. As if through Ignorance I toil'd and labour'd in vain, and wanted Foresight to provide for the Household Affairs; and you do not consider that I have as much Understanding and Foresight as you, to judge what is necessary for me. I having more Age and Experience in Nature, besides that, God has bestow'd on me his divine Light, to which you owe more Deference, than to the Sentiments of corrupt Nature, which regards not eternal Things more than a Beast does; and it is enough to it that it have its Ease and Conveniences, let other Things go as they will.

§. 8. But he who desires to become a Christian is touch'd with nothing but what concerns the Perfection of his Soul; he values and esteems all the Means that lead to it, and is little concern'd, whether any Office he does be mean or honourable

Honourable, provided it be pleasing to God. But the more natural Man does all like a Beast, who being put into a Meadow, seeks after the best Grass or Pasture. The natural Man does just the same, when he changes, his Place; he applies himself to consider if he is well lodged and treated; if he has a good Bed, and is well accommodated for every Thing; if he has Meat and Drink that pleases his Taste, &c. Now it concerns you, my Friend, to consider, whether you will follow the brutal Part or the supream Part of your Soul, which ought to aim only at Things Eternal, for which it was created, and not to seek to live at its Ease in this World. On the contrary, it is sent into this World to endure and suffer, for accomplishing the Penitence, which God has enjoined it for its Sins. For this Reason the Christian Soul is always content with mere Necessaries, and will not (even tho' it could) taste the Delights of this present Life, that it may wait for more Divine Pleasures in the other Life to all Eternity.

§. 9. Can I believe, my Friend, that you aim at this blest'd Eternity, when I see, that instead of *seeking the Kingdom of Heaven*, as Christ adviseth us, promising, that *all other Things shall be given us*, you seek all those other Things, without relying on the Promises of *Jesus Christ*, nor the Promises that charitable Persons have made you, who are able to help you? But you are disquieted and troubled with Care about your Food and Health, fearing to be in Want in the Midst of the Abundance in which you are; and being desirous to run from one Place to another to seek out for better Accommodations. Hence you ask me, *If I would cause you to be moved to Amsterdam, with all your Things, where you intended to live in a Chamber alone; and that tho' you should live there upon Bread and Water, you would*

would be content? But you do not perceive, that these are all Temptations of the Devil, who would drive you into Extremities. For how could you be content to live there alone, since you seem to be almost despairing in your present Solitude, tho' our Brother attends you at least four Times a Day to serve and feed you? And how would you be pleased with Bread and Water, since here you are not pleas'd with good wholsome Victuals, and good Wine and Beer, which is never denied you? And how would you be better serv'd with a Worldly Woman, who no doubt would fool you, and perhaps rob you of what you have, and turn you out and despise you, when you had nothing more to give her: Seeing you are not content with the charitable Service which a good and honest Man does you.

§. 10. By all these Circumstances you may clearly perceive, that it is the Devil that seduces you, that he may ruin both your Body and Soul. You may learn by this also to understand the Corruption of your Nature, which is inconstant; will not suffer any Thing; still covets what it has not, and is displeased and discontented without any Ground: tho' I have so often declared in my Writings, *That there needs no more to bring one to Damnation, than to simply follow his own corrupt Nature*, which is an infallible Truth. For, as I think, all Christians believe, that all the Posterity of Adam are born *Children of Wrath and Perdition*. Now if they live in this State, then assuredly they die in it: For can they be saved, if they still abide in this State of Damnation in which they are born?

§. 11. I do not think that you embrace that Satanical Doctrine, which teaches, that Souls, which are in a State of Damnation from their Birth, shall be saved thro' the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, tho' they are not born again into
his

his Spirit ; for this is most false. For never any shall partake of the Merits of Christ, but they who are his Disciples ; and none can be the Disciples of Christ, but he that takes up his Cross, and follows him (b) : But the natural Man declines to suffer, and seeks rather to have the best and finest of every Thing for his Use. And tho' *Jesus Christ* has said to all Christians, *Be ye Followers of me, and take the lowest Place* † ; yet Nature rejects this Doctrine, will not imitate Christ in any Thing, nor take the lowest Place, but loves rather to follow its own Inclinations, and to have the first Place, and yet withal imagines that it has a Share in the Merits of Christ, tho' in the whole Course of its Life it acts contrary to his Life and Doctrine.

§. 12. In which Men are greatly deceived ; for Christ has merited nothing for those who will not imitate and follow him. And tho' on his Part he died for all Men, without excepting one more than another, or that he died to save *Peter*, excluding *John* (as some do assert this damnable Predestination ;) yet he most assuredly died for all those who voluntarily chuse to become his Disciples ; and he certainly rejects all those who disdain to imitate and follow him, desiring to be saved by his Merits only. This confutes all those wretched Predestinarians, who being desirous to enjoy two Paradises, make Men believe falsely, that they shall be saved by the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, after they have followed in this World the Bent of their corrupt Nature, which being the Enemy of God and of Christ, cannot hope in his Merits. And such live and

(b) *Matth. x. 38.*

† *Luke xiv. 10.*

die Enemies of our Saviour's Sufferings for they will not embrace and follow them, but avoid them as much as they can, instead of *embracing or taking up the Cross* willingly to follow Christ, that thus thro' Sufferings they may enter with him into Glory.

§. 13. It is not to be imagin'd that *Jesus* would tell Christians, that they must take up the Cross of Wood, upon which he was crucified on Mount *Calvary*; for that material Cross was not yet in Being, when *Jesus Christ* gave them those Precepts; but he meant the Suffering of Hardships and Inconveniencies; of Persecution and Contempt; of Poverty and Sickness, and all Sorts of Things that are grievous to the Body or the Mind; telling them, they must take all these Things patiently when they happen, yea even rejoice in them, and thank God for them, who makes us worthy of the holy Sufferings, which accompanied our Lord *Jesus*, even to the last Period of his Life.

§. 14. Consider now, my Friend, whether you be the Disciple of *Jesus*, and if you take up your Cross to follow him, when you are so impatient for a little Indisposition, which in all Appearance you have brought upon yourself. For I am told, that having seen a dead Mouse in a Soldier's Hand, you were affrighted at it, and trembled like one half dead, and said that all the Blood of your Body was disorder'd with the Terror and Fear: Upon which you was seiz'd with a Fever, which has not yet left you. Was not this a rare Occasion of becoming Sick? It may be justly said, that you have not Faith in God; and that you have let *Corrupt Nature* still rule over you, to which your Reason is a Slave. For this Pusillanimity ought to have been tam'd and overcome by Reason,

son, tho' it had been only with Respect to this present Life. You ought to have done Violence to this Corruption, that it might have been restrain'd within due Bounds. Much more ought you to have done Violence to it, *that you might take the Kingdom of Heaven by Force*; for *Jesus Christ* saith, *That the Violent take it by Force* (c).

§. 15. Not that we must use Arms or Force to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven, for God has given it freely unto us; and he had prepared it for Man before he created him. But this Force and Violence must be exercised upon ourselves, that we may subdue and overcome the *Corruption of our Nature*, which always opposeth itself directly to our eternal Happiness, stopping up the Way that leads to Life by its Insolencies, and the Disturbances which it gives the Soul, takes it from walking or flying in that strait Way that Leads to Life, of which Christ says, *That few walk in it*; because Men for the most Part chuse rather to perish in the broad Way, by following the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature, than to be saved by resisting their own Wills. This is the common Course of the World at present, while Men do not so much as know the Necessity there is of denying their own Will, but live as Beasts, and follow the Instinct of *Corrupt Nature*, and withall believe they shall come to the Kingdom of Heaven, because of some pious Desires and Motions which God gives them.

§. 16. In which they are greatly deceived; for Hell is paved with good Purposes, which were never put in Execution. For truly all good Desires and good Motions come directly from God, and not from Man, who is become so

(c) *Matth.* xi. 12.

corrupted by Sin, that of himself he is not capable of so much as one good Thought: And if he finds that he has any, it is God only that excites them in his Soul, that he may try how faithful he will be in that which is good. And when the Soul does not correspond with the good Thought, which God doth graciously give it; it encreases its Sins by its Ingratitude, into which it could not fall, if God had not given it those good Desires.

§. 17. Wherefore a Man flatters himself with vain Hopes, when he Thinks to be saved, because he has had good Purposes and Desires, which aggravate his Sins, when they are not put in Execution. For he who is moved by good Desires, is more obliged to do Good, than he who is not; otherwise he slights and despises the Grace of good Desires, which God has granted him. Therefore it is said in the Holy Scripture, *(d) He who knows the Father's Will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes*; because he has resisted more the Grace of God, than he who has not received those good Desires and good Purposes. Wherefore he who is moved with good Desires, ought to take heed to them, and labour to find out all fit Means for putting them in Execution, and to avoid all that may hinder him from doing this.

§. 18. It is true a Man cannot do any Good, being inclin'd to all Evil, and all Good comes from God alone; nevertheless, he may resist the Evil which he does himself. For the Corruption of human Nature was not made by God, it is Man's own Work, and he ought to have as much Power over his own Work, as a Painter or Artificer

(d) Luke xii. 47.

hath over the Picture or Figure he hath formed. He can break or spoil it as he pleases; for the Matter of it belongs to him as well as the Form. He can throw it into the Fire, or destroy it some other Way, when it does not please him. Even so may a Man undo his own corrupt Will, when Eternal Good is more pleasing and acceptable to him than this World's Goods, for which he has an Averſion, when the Soul has discover'd their Filthineſs, Deformity and Uncertainty: He is vexed to ſee the Work of his Hands ſo deformed and ugly, that he can no longer ſuffer it, nor endure to look upon it. Then indeed a Man does very eaſily deny himſelf, apply himſelf to break and deſtroy this naughty Corruption, to make head againſt it, reſiſt it, bridle it, and at laſt totally root it out; that by *this Force and Violence he may take the Kingdom of Heaven* (e).

§. 19. And he muſt not pretend to ſay with the ſoft and delicate Part of Mankind, (which can't ſuffer any Trouble or Inconvenience) That he has not the Grace of God for overcoming his corrupt Nature. For this is falſe; ſeeing God, when he created Man, gave him a Free-will to do Good or Evil at his Choice; and thereafter, Man by Sin loſt the Power of doing Good, if he receive not ſpecial Grace from God to do it. Now this is always given of God, when he pours into the Soul good Deſires, which are ſo many Calls that God gives on his Part, by a particular Grace. And in this Senſe it is ſaid in Holy Writ, that (f) *Many are called*: For God excites good Deſires almoſt in all Men, both in the Good

(e) *Matth. xi. 12.*

(f) *Matth. xx. 16.*

and Evil: *But few are chosen*; because there are so few who chuse this strait Way of denying their OWN WILL.

§. 20. Many read the Gospel, and desire to be the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*, but very few take up Arms and set themselves to resist *their Corrupt Nature*, which is the Source of all Evil; and yet without this Resistance none shall be saved, let them believe or say what they will; for we cannot do well, unless we cease to do Evil, which is the Offspring of Self-will. This very few understand; hence many perish in the Way of Virtue, for that they have not sufficiently discover'd the absolute Necessity of DYING TO THEMSELVES, that they may live to *Jesus Christ*. They Discourse indeed of spiritual Things, and have fine Speculations about Virtue; they love to speak of them, but they come not up to the main Point, which is to break their own Will, that hindreth all Kind of true Virtue. Hence it is that so many die in their Apprenticeship. Of such the Scripture speaks, when it says, (g) *These are silly Women, ever learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*. Indeed they read the Bible, and have much of it by Heart; they sing Psalms, make long Prayers, observe the appointed Fasts and Vigils: They keep the Sabbath; go to Church; give out of their Abundance to the Poor, and for other pious Uses: But, in the mean Time, they do not deny their OWN Will, nor restrain their CORRUPT NATURE.

§. 21. Nevertheless this is the Essence of all true Virtue, without which none can be saved, for this Self-denial

(g) 2 Tim. iii. 16.

is the one Thing necessary, of which *Jesus Christ* spoke to *Martha*, the Sister of *Lazarus*, saying, *(b) Mary hath chosen the better Part, which shall not be taken from her*; to shew that *Mary* had chosen the most perfect Way, by denying herself, forsaking all that she had loved in this World, to follow *Christ*. She had already made a Divorce inwardly with *Flesh and Blood*, the Pleasures and Poms of the World; despising the Pleasures of Taste, and all that might give any Satisfaction to corrupt Nature; that she might aspire and aim only after Eternal Thing: And to facilitate this, she forsakes, from that Time, the Conversation of Men, her Country, her Wealth and Kindred, and retires to the Desert, and instead of a House or Palace, contents herself with the Cave of a Rock, that thus in every Thing she might resist the Desires of her corrupt Nature.

b. §. 22. And for this only Reason *Jesus Christ* says, *That she had chosen the better Part*, which neither Devils nor Men could take from her: For the Devil has no hold upon Man's Denying his own Will. He may indeed insinuate himself into external good Works, and likewise into the good Desires a Man has, that he may tempt him to vain Glory, or make him exceed in something; but in the Denial of one's Will, there is nothing but good Order and Humility: For God himself governs the Soul that denies itself, and resigns itself to the Conduct of his Holy Spirit. And this is the Treasure that Thieves cannot steal, Worms do not eat, nor Rust corrupt: For all that God doth is permanent, and cannot be evil or imperfect. So that this Way of Self-denial may be called, *The true and*

(b) *Luke* x. 42.

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sure Way to Paradise; so that there is no need of seeking out so many Ways, Means and By-paths, as Men teach now-a-days, for obtaining Salvation; which Means do often turn Men out of the Way of Happiness, instead of guiding them directly thither. For how many are there who think they are in the Way of Salvation, because they go to Church to hear a Lecture or Sermon, or because they pray, fast, or give Alms to the Poor? Tho' all this avails nothing, if it do not tend to the renouncing of the Self-Will of Man, which is perverted and corrupted by Sin, and doth and will still resist the Designs of God, if it is not withstood and contradicted in every Thing. Wherefore this Denial of our Self-will is the *one Thing necessary*; and he who embraces this, chuses the better Part, that shall not be taken from him. For wicked Men cannot hinder a Man from renouncing his own Will; as they may hinder Prayers, Fasting, Alms-giving, or some external good Works, which may be stolen away by Vain-glory or Self-conceit.

§. 23. Wherefore I counsel you my Friend, as I do all well-meaning Souls, to chuse this better Part, which our Lord *Jesus* approved in *Mary Magdalen*; by resisting your own Will, subjecting it in all Things to the Will of God, who will assuredly govern it, if you resign it to his Power. He will do it either immediately in you, or mediately by me. But so long as you will needs follow *your own Will*, and the Motions of your *corrupt Nature*, the Holy Spirit can never govern you, and you are in hazard of throwing yourself into many Evils.

§. 24. For what Good can proceed from a Will that is the Enemy of God, as are the Wills of all Men who live according to corrupt Nature? They bring forth nothing but

but Evil and Sin. Ah! what else can a deprav'd Will do, but continually offend its God, whose Enemy it is. Truly, as none can hope for Friendship, or any good Office from his sworn Enemy, so we must not imagine, that the Self-will of Man will seek to please God, or do his Will; seeing it loves itself only, seeking its own Satisfaction and Conveniences, respecting Time only, and neglecting Eternity. And by these Means *Self-Will* drives Man's Soul into everlasting Destruction.

§. 25. For it is easy to conceive, that God having created Man to be loved by him, or to take his Delight with him, God neither can nor ought to love him, when he sees that he turns away his Affections from his God, to love himself, and what else he delights in, in this wretched World. This turning away of his Affections is the Essence of all Sin; whatever other Name may be given to it. For in the Beginning, when Man was created, God demanded nothing of him but his Love, which was the End for which he created him. Now he who loves himself, and follows his own Will, acts directly against the *Designs of God*; and he damns himself by withdrawing his Affections from the Fountain of all Good, to place them in the Source of all Evil, which is the Corruption of Man. Whence it may be concluded, that all those who follow their own Wills, damn themselves by continually offending God, and despising the Purpose he had concerning Man, when he created him; wilfully casting off his Friendship, for the Love of perishing Things, when they are capable of loving so good and so powerful a God.

§. 26. I think, my Friend, you have never understood those Truths, and have hitherto followed your Self-will, without thinking that you did Evil: Yea, you rather imagin'd

imagined you were wise and very fit to govern yourself, tho' truly you are not so. You have indeed some good Desires, which God excites in your Soul: But you have never put in Practice the Denial of yourself, but have still reckon'd it Prudence to look to your Conveniences, your Honour and Profit, which you have valued too much, and withal have been too solicitous of your Health. Now all these Things arise from the Love and Esteem you have for yourself, while you think you deserve every Thing: And that under such a Cover of Reason and Piety, that you perceive it not yourself, but believe you are virtuous and guided by a good Spirit, while, in the mean Time, you are far from it. On the contrary, I observe that you are led in all your Ways, by the Devil and corrupt Nature.

§. 27. It is then with great Reason said in the Holy Scripture, (i) *That the Heart of Man is deceitful above all Things*: For, in effect, we see almost all Men seduced by their own Thoughts; they are mutable, inconstant, not knowing what they would be at, and when they think they do best, it is then they do worst. So strangely does Man's Heart deceive him! So that there remains nothing sound in all the Corruption, that Sin has brought upon the Body and Mind of Man, who truly has great Reason to distrust himself, instead of learning to his own Understanding, which is good for nothing but to betray him into many Evils.

§. 28. For my own Part, I durst never follow my own Judgement in any Thing, because I know it was corrupt, foolish and ignorant, as is all the Posterity of *Adam* since

(i) *Jer.* xvii. 9.

the Fall : For I found myself often deceived by my own Judgment, and misled by my own Thoughts ; which made me do many Things of which I repented afterwards. Therefore I hearken no longer to my own Thoughts, nor to the Desires of my own Heart : But I reject all these as impertinent, even tho' my own Will have a Cover of Reason, Piety or Virtue. I am jealous of all this, till the Spirit of God makes me to know, that my Desires come from him, and till he direct me to the right Way of bringing them to effect. For otherwise I stop in the Midst even of many good Desires, chusing still rather to forbear than to do Evil : For this is a sure Rule to me, *That Man's own Will inclines always to Evil, and never to Good.* And since my supream Will has absolutely determin'd never to do Evil ; I therefore bridle my Self-will, and never permit it to do any Thing but that which God approves.

§. 29. But I perceive not, my Friend, that you do thus, nor yet they who are join'd to our Society. I observe rather, that you follow your own Wills as much as you can, as if they were govern'd by the Holy Spirit, tho' truly they are not. You yourselves may observe, that you follow as much as you can your own Wills ; and that your Corruption (which ought to be subjected in all Things to the Will of God) rules even over your Reason, which is less obedient to the Holy Spirit, than to your Self-Will, that bears Sway in all your Actions.

§. 30. Wherefore I cannot think you imagine, that you are led by the Holy Spirit seeing no Signs of this do appear : For the Holy Spirit brings still along with him his Gifts, and brings forth his Fruits in the Soul where he dwells. And if he were in yours, he would infallibly bring forth there Joy, Peace, Patience, and the other Fruits which are reckon'd up to be Twelve in the Holy
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Scriptures †, and which do not appear in your Soul. For instead of Joy, there is nothing in it but Sadness and Anguish: And instead of Peace, nothing but Trouble, Disturbance and Discontent; impatient of every Thing; desiring to have all after your own Fashion, and never pleas'd with any Thing that is given or done to you. You told us, *You loved Solitude*; and when you are left alone, you are impatient for want of Company. You said, *If you were left two Nights longer in your first Chamber, you should die*; and when I had prepared another for you, you said, *You was not disposed to go to it*; in the mean Time you called to the Sentinels of the Castle for Help, as if we were letting you die for Want, and caused them to guide you out of the Castle by two Soldiers, like one dying of Despair. You trembled with the Change when you came to us, and called for your Bed; and when it was made ready, you said, *A sick Person ought to sit up as long as he can*, and you would not lie down. The Bed you thought had a Smell, and the Sheets you thought were not white enough. In short, nothing pleases you. You disdain the most delicious Meat and Drink, and make an Idol of your Body and Health, about which your Thoughts are still taken up, instead of seeing to the Perfection of your Soul. This makes me see clearly, that your Soul is not at all guided by the Holy Spirit, and that it does not cherish that Joy, Peace and Patience, which he gives infallibly to all the Souls that yield up themselves unto him.

§. 31. But since you will needs govern yourself, he leaves you in all these Defects, and that justly. For the Holy Spirit compels no Body, neither does he impart his

Graces to any but those who seek and desire them, and yield up themselves wholly unto him. For he would bestow his Grace to no Purpose on those who are not willing to obey his Instructions. Therefore we need not wonder that so few have Fellowship with God, and receive the Wisdom of his Holy Spirit, seeing there are so few who thus hunger and thirst after Righteousness, and fewer who yield up their Wills entirely to his Conduct: For Men, for the most Part, love rather to do Evil, in following their own Wills, than to do Good, in following God's Will, which only is good,

§. 32. And since God was pleased to make Man a Creature altogether free, he lets him act according to his Liberty, which will never be constrain'd to do Good, nor to do Evil; seeing these two depend upon the Choice of Man himself. The good Spirit does indeed give him good Desires, and Light whereby to discern Good from Evil: But this Holy Spirit will never constrain the Will of Man, who if he hearken to his good Motions, and put them in Practice, shall thereupon receive continually Encrease of Grace. This the holy Scripture confirms, where it is said, (k) *If ye be faithful in that which is little, I will place you over greater Things.*

§ 33. But if a Man reject and neglect good Desires and Inspirations they shall be taken from him; as it is said in the Scripture, (l) *Take the Talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten Talents.* And the Man who received the Talent was so far from being happy thereby, that

(k) *Matth. xxv. 23.*

(l) *Matth. xxv. 28.*

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he is condemned for this Talent; *Cast the unprofitable Servant into outer Darkneſs*; becauſe he would not trade with the Talent that had been given him. This is alſo held forth *by the Tree which Jeſus Chriſt curſed, becauſe it bore no Fruit*: To ſhew, that all they who have received divine Grace, and been moved by good Deſires and Purpoſes, ſhall not be ſaved; but thoſe only who put thoſe good Deſires in Execution, and have profited by the Graces of the Holy Spirit.

§. 34. This indeed overturns the abſurd Opinion of the Predeſtinarians, who will do nothing, but ſlothfully lean to the Merits of Chriſt. They will be greatly diſappointed at Death, when they find, too late, that they have deſpiſed the Doctrines of Chriſt, and, to their Loſs, perverted the whole Meaning of the holy Scriptures. For what Need was there that *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhould curſe the Fig-tree, if it was predeſtinated to a Curſe? And why ſhould the unprofitable Servant have been condemned for putting up his Talent in a Napkin? Seeing *Jeſus Chriſt* has merited all, Men have no need to labour for any Thing. Verily God would be cruel, and the Scripture falſe, if this wretched Predeſtination were true; or that perverſe Opinion, that Men ought to do nothing for working out their Salvation: For the Apoſtle expreſſly ſaith, *(m) Work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling*. But to juſtify the Sloth and Deſection of the Chriſtians of this Age, theſe Predeſtinarians have invented ſubtle Arguments, by which Men may be encouraged to live according to their corrupt Nature in all Kind of Sins and Abominations, and yet be perſuaded, that they ſhall be ſaved by the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

(m) *Phil. ii. 12.*

And such is the Blindness of Men now-a-days, that they perceive not that these are the Deceivers of whom the Scripture speaks, when we are bid, *(n)* *Beware of false Prophets, that we be not deceived by them*; and are told, *That they shall deceive many*. Men suffer their Minds to be blinded by these false Prophets, who are come in these last Times, and deceive many, tho' their Doctrine overturns the whole Scripture, and contradicts the Truth of *Jesus Christ*, who, with an Assèveration, said to *Nicodemus*, *(o)* *That unless a Man be converted, and become as a little Child, he shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. Christ then must have told a Lie, when he declared these Things, tho' he confirmed the Truth of them with a solemn Affirmation, or he must have talk'd idly: For if it is true, that God hath predestinated one to Damnation, and another to Salvation, what need have they to know, that *they must be converted, and become as little Children*, since they must be damned or saved according to the divine Predestination? And to what Purpose should he affirm, that *they should not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, if he had merited all for them, or if God had determined to save them by the sole Merits of *Jesus Christ*.

§. 45. These Arguments are so convincing, that he must be of a very dull Capacity, who cannot comprehend them, and who sees not that these Doctrines are seducing, and tend to the Damnation of the Well-meaning, who believe that they do Honour and Service to Christ, by ascribing to his Merits the Cause of their Salvation. And indeed the Salvation of all Men depends upon the Merits

(n) *Matth. vii. 12.*

(o) *John iii.*

of Christ, provided these Merits be not taken in a perverted Sense for the End of Salvation, when really they are the only true Means absolutely necessary for the Attainment of Salvation. For if Christ had not offer'd himself as Mediator between God and Man, all Mankind had remain'd lost in the State of Damnation, into which Adam sunk them, he having undone himself and all his Posterity. But Christ having Compassion on his lost Brethren, interceded with God his Father for them, and therefore charged himself with their Miseries, and bore the Pains due to their Sins, that he might teach them by what Means they might be deliver'd from this Damnation, and recover the Love of God. And to encourage them to bear this heavy Burthen of the Pains due to their Sins, he condescended to take it up, and march before them, as a valiant Captain marches at the Head of his Soldiers, that he may encourage them to fight valiantly against their Enemies.

§. 36. But if these Soldiers were so base and cowardly as to sit still and live in Softness and Ease, saying, *Our Captain will fight for us, we will let him march alone. It is enough that we know he has Courage, and can bear well all the Fatigues and Hardships: This will relieve and save us; and having this Hope, let us live in Mirth and Jollity.* Would not a prudent Warrior say; that all the Soldiers of that Company ought to be hanged on the first Trees they came to, for their Infidelity and brutish Cowardice, and Sloth? How much more should a good Christian condemn the Infidelity and Baseness of those who say, *That Jesus Christ has suffered all for Men, and that they ought not to do any Thing to imitate him; that it is enough that he has merited for them, and his Merits will save them:* Where they do not distinguish the End from the Means, nor consider, that
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God created Man only to be loved by him, and that Christ came to teach us by what Means Man may return unto this LOVE of his God, after having so basely lost it, and placed his Love upon himself, or some other vile Creature.

§. 37. And these Means are so necessary, that it may be truly said, None shall be saved but by the Merits of *Jesus Christ*; for none can be saved, or recover God's Favour, without doing the Works, and obeying the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, which are so many proper Remedies prepared for as many Diseases and Wounds, as Sin has brought upon our Souls. But if one will not apply these Remedies to each Wound of the Soul, it can never be healed, but will perish in its Ulcers and Sores. Christ by his divine Wisdom saw, that Man turn'd away from the LOVE OF GOD to love himself, or this World's Wealth and Pleasures: And therefore he came to teach him how to deny himself, and to embrace Poverty and Hardships. Now these Things are despised by the Christians of this Age, as if they would thus bespeak their Master and Captain, *Jesus Christ*: *Be thou thyself poor; embrace Sufferings; deny thyself in our stead; for we desire rather to live in Ease and Pleasure, to be rich, and follow our own Will. It's enough that we know thou hast suffer'd even to the Death of the Cross; that thou wast despised, poor and humble; that we may hope for Salvation by thy Merits, without being obliged to do any Thing ourselves, or to break off and overcome our evil Habits. March thou alone, and enter the List, while we take our Ease and Pleasure.*

§. 38. Don't such Soldiers of Christ, deserve rather to be condemn'd by his Merits, than to be saved by them? Verily all Men of sound Judgment will say, YEA; but they who are made blind and stupid by the false Doctrines
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Men, will still maintain, *That they shall be saved by the Merits of Christ*; tho' those very Merits will condemn them, because they would not follow so good and so perfect an Example as Christ has given them, doing his Works before them, and withal saying unto them, *Follow me: (p)* And again, *I have done all these Things to give you an Example.* For what need had Christ to suffer, and labour to deny his own Will (which was more holy and perfect than that of all Men) since he never sin'd, and therefore was not liable to suffer for Sin? He stood in no need of Men, for he would have been as glorious after the Damnation of all Men, as he was before their Fall: So that he had no Interest, as to himself, either in the Salvation or Damnation of Men. But his Soul, flaming with a holy and perfect Charity towards Men, he would needs shew them by what Means they might recover God's Favour and Grace, that so they might work out their Salvation. But those ungrateful and presumptuous Men say now-a-days, they are not oblig'd to do any Thing, and that Christ has done all for them; as if he were their hired Servant to bear their Burdens: Whereas they ought rather to blush with Shame and Confusion, when they see, that such a Lord has so far abased himself, that he might shew them the Way of Salvation, saying to them of himself, *I am the Way (q)*: And again, *He that loveth me shall do the Works that I do, yea, and greater Works shall he do.* But the Modern Christians say, *That they cannot imitate Jesus Christ*; which is as much as to say, *They cannot be saved*: For after he has so particularly pointed out to them so many Means of Salvation, the Blame cannot any longer

(p) *John* xiii. 15. 1 *Pet.* ii. 21.

(q) *John* xiv. 12.

be laid on the Grace of God, not on the Merits of Christ, but only on the Self-will of Man, which resists God's Will, and will not yield, nor give up itself to be govern'd by the divine Wisdom.

§. 39. Perhaps you will say to me, my Friend, That you desire to follow God's Will in all Things, and to resign yourself to his holy Conduct, being ready to do every Thing that you know to be the Will of God. Which yet is most false, since your Soul is not disposed so much as to know the Will of God. These are but the false Persuasions of your deceitful Heart, which makes you think that to be true which is really false. Therefore it is said in the Scripture, (r) that *the Heart is deceitful above all Things*. And as one desires always to excuse and cover his Faults, so you will say, perhaps, that you know not God's Will, that you may do it. But I will tell you, you may know it both from the holy Scriptures, and by my Writings; and that if you do not know it, it is certainly because you will not know it; tho' you are obliged to learn and to understand it, since you have the Means of doing it; and Ignorance cannot excuse Sin. Verily God will not admit of your Excuses, they being such as even I cannot admit, when I see your Deeds quite contrary to your Words and Thoughts; for you think you are subject in every Thing, while you are not subject in any Thing. I advised you to divert your Mind a little, and to do some little Things that are necessary in House-keeping; such as to feed the Pullets, to pull Goose-berries, or to do some other little Business that is not difficult, and which the Brethren, that are fit for other Things, must do,

(r) Jer. xvii. 9.

because you neglect it. But you would not comply in so very small Matters, saying, *You could not do these Things;* tho' you are neither lame, nor maim'd, nor blind, nor sick; and all the Weakness which you say you have, comes from this, that out of a foolish Fancy you will not eat nor drink, but after your own Way, and when you please. About which I have also written to you, and advised you to eat oftener, and to take a little Wine; which Advice you likewise despised, pertinaciously refusing to eat, telling me, *that oftentimes, for the Space of three Days, you had eat nothing.*

§. 40. Which I do not at all approve, and I think it is an Invention of the Devil to make you die his Martyr, and to persuade you falsely, that you have the Virtue of fasting more than other Men; tho' your Fasts proceed from the Vice of Wilfulness and Arrogance, and to shew that you are sick, that you may not be put to do any Work. For if it were a Virtue to live without Meat, certainly *Jesus Christ*, his Apostles, the holy Prophets and Patriarchs, would have lived without Eating, or taken only a Refreshment once in three Days (as you say you have done several Times:) But all those holy Souls did eat and drink according to their Necessities; knowing, that every Thing that has Life, must be sustained with Food suitable to its Nature; and for that they would not tempt God, as you do; desiring it seems to live supernaturally, or to let yourself die of Hunger; and that under a Pretext of Virtue and Temperance. Which serves for a Cover to your Sins of Wilfulness and Disobedience, the two Pillars upon which all your seeming Virtue is built. This now you must discover, if you would be saved, and must not persevere in the deceitful Virtue which you say you have, remembring always what the Scripture says, *That the Heart of Man is deceitful above all Things.* And if

you please to examine whether yours deceives you, you need only to observe your Words and Actions, which you will find to be false and counterfeit in many Things. For when you came first amongst us, you said diverse Times, *You thought you was in a Paradise*; but afterwards you beg'd to be carried back to *Amsterdam*, and that you would chuse rather to stay there in a Chamber alone, tho' you should have nothing but dry Bread and Beer to live upon: For you imagine, that you would live very soberly; and yet we see daily, that the Meat cannot be too dainty, nor the Wine too delicious for you. Which shews the Deceit of your Heart, while you think you have the Virtues, of which you are altogether void. Besides you have often said to us, *That you would willingly do all Kind of Service to the Society, if it were in your Power*: But when I desired you to feed four young Pigeons, you said, *You could not, and that you had an Aversion to it; that your Mother had not taught you to do such Things, and therefore you would not do it*; and so you sent me back the Pigeons, adding, *That if the King, the Emperor, or the Pope, should command you to feed those Creatures or else to lose your Head, you would chuse the last*. And at the same Time, you kneel'd down in a Fury, and shew'd, with your Hand, how you would rather let your Head be cut off, than that you would feed those young Pigeons. And thus also, on many other Occasions, I have found, by Experience, that your Words and Thoughts are false and deceitful.

§. 41. For you say, that you are free from Covetousness, and that you would willingly throw your Money away from you, and yet you was extreemly anxious and vexed, because your Trunk was not brought out of the Castle into your Chamber, that you might look upon your Money; and with a furious Passion, you compell'd our Brethren to leave all other

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other necessary and useful Business, and go with our Horses to fetch this Trunk. And to cover this Care and Anxiety to have your Money, you said, *It was to keep it for the Beboof of God's Children*: which is a very great Mistake. For if you had been disengaged from the Love of earthly Goods, you would have left all you had in the Brethren's Custody, without being so very anxious about it yourself, after the Example of the Christians of the Primitive Church, who put all in common, laying all at the Apostles Feet. But you will give nothing in common, being desirous to remain Proprietor of all, that you may dispose of it at your Pleasure, and you are offended that Wine, Brandy, and other Things are not bought for you with this Money; and that a Woman was not hired to make your Bed, clean your Room, and do you other Service. Yea, you tell our Brethren, *That you will pay them with your Money*, and such like Things; tho' yet you have not much to give, and our Brethren are not mercenary, but serve and assist you out of pure Charity. And when you are convinc'd of this, you tell them, *You would be ready to do the same Service to a Turk, if he stood in Need of it.*

§. 42. This is as deceitful as all the Rest; for you want to be served by our Brethren, and yet you will not serve them in the least Thing; for when they recommend to you the doing of something for the Society, you say, *You have not learned to do these Things.* Even as you told me to Day, when I saw you at the Fire picking a Fowl for yourself and others, you said, complaining of this Employ, *I never did such a Thing in my Life*; as if you would have me to understand, that so mean and servile a Work did not become you, and that you should be left at Liberty to do nothing. For you say, *That by the Goodness of God, you have been still at Liberty to lie down or rise when you pleas'd.*

pleas'd. As if you thought it a great Matter to have the same Liberty that a Beast has, which lies down and rises when it will, and in every Thing else follows the Motions of Corrupt Nature.

§. 43. In which, it seems, you would imitate them, when you say, *That you cannot do that which is not pleasing and agreeable to you;* and you conclude, *That all that pleases you, and which you relish is good for you;* tho' this Argument is not founded upon Reason; for a sensual Person is usually delighted with that which is contrary to his Health; and that which is pleasing to Corrupt Nature, is oft Times prejudicial to the Health. But you being accusom'd to follow your own Will, your deceitful Heart makes you believe, that Evil is Good, and Good is Evil: For truly there is nothing Good but the Will of God; and nothing Evil but the Self-will of Man, which nevertheless you esteem as God himself, or rather more than God. I know indeed that you will not say this in express Terms; but your Actions proclaim it more clearly than your Words, while in effect you own, that you will not do any Thing, but what is pleasing to your corrupt Nature, and no more, tho' it were never so good, useful and profitable to the Society. For you oft-times say, *That tho' God should command you to do any Thing that you had not learn'd, you would not do it:* adding, *That God has given to every one the Grace to do something, and you were never taught to do any Thing, except to write and to pray: that every Thing else is uneasy to you, nay altogether impossible.* In which also your Heart greatly deceives you; for one Man may do what another can do, after he has learned it, except he be blind or lame, sick or without Strength; which you are not; neither have you any other Sickness but that which you bring upon yourself by your Fancy, and by your wilful
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and too long fasting, tho' thro' the Deceitfulness of your Heart you think you are naturally weak and sick, and therefore incapable of doing any Thing that may be useful to the Society: as if you desired to live only for yourself, and would have every Body to do all that is necessary for you, which you will not learn; and you say, it is impossible for you to do Things that are most easy, healthful, and fit for diverting the Fancies that the Devil continually suggests to your Mind, that he may destroy you, and disturb those who desire to help you.

§. 44. But you will not consider these Things, and you think you have Reason to act as you do, neither do you think of amending; on the contrary, you would willingly put us in the wrong, because we do not flatter sufficiently the Corruption of your Nature; which we desire not to do, knowing that we may offend God in another, nine several Ways: We are resolv'd to Aid and Succour all those who desire to be true Christians; but not those who wilfully follow, as much as they can, the Motions of their corrupt Nature, as you do. For this would be to *cast Pearls before Swine, and the Children's Bread to Dogs*; for we should thereby feed and serve those, who will needs live only for themselves; and will not labour for the Good of their Neighbour, as all of us here do, without any other Necessity, but that we may please God and assist them; that we may be able to say, with St. Paul (s): *Behold these Hands ministred to my own Necessities, and those that were with me.* But you will not follow this Doctrine of the Apostle, but desire rather to live in Idleness, and to be the Devil's Pillow, than to labour in the Lord's Vineyard, as we en-

(s) *Acts* xx. 34.

deavor to do before you. This you ought to imitate, rather than to despise it, or to imagine that it would be impossible for you, seeing *David* says, (r) *that through God he could leap over Walls*: and *St. Paul* (u); *I can do all Things thro' Christ that strengthens me*. For my Part, I perceive clearly, that *one may do all that he Wills*, being assisted by the divine Grace, in which God is not wanting to him who seeks and desires it. But you take no Care to ask it, seeing you desire not to have it; loving rather to live in Idleness, than to obtain Grace to labour that you may serve yourself, and have what is needful for you. Thus you are unmindful of what the Apostle says, that *he who will not work, neither shall he eat*. And to be just, you ought to be satisfied with so little, as that you might not need to provide for any other Thing but Bread and Beer, and thus a deal of Labour would be spared: But you must have dainty Meats to please your Taste, clean Linen, Dishes, &c. And yet you will not be at the Pains to clean them yourself, but think you deserve to be served by others. This is highly contrary to the Christian Virtue and Charity which covets not to be served, nor to impose servile Work on others. For my Part, when I am afflicted with Sicknes, I lament nothing so much as the Trouble I give others, to serve me in my Need: But the Trouble given to the whole Society does not move you, provided you be served according to your Humour.

§. 45. This is an Evidence of your Self-Love, and of the great Esteem you have for yourself, which yet you will not acknowledge because of the Deceitfulness of your

(r) *Psal.* xviii.

(u) *Phil.* iv. 13.

Heart, which makes you say, *that you are the least among the Brethren, and that you would gladly serve them if you could.* If this were true, you could ease them of a great deal of their servile and necessary Business, as to clean the House, make the Fire, to rinse the Glasses, to clean the Spoons, to gather and wash the Herbs for the Kitchen; but your Heart is too haughty to do such mean Things. Such Meanness is not consistent with the Esteem you have of yourself. You reckon all these Things below you, and that it is fit and reasonable that another do them for you. And that you may not be ashamed to see that I and the Brethren also do these Things before you, you tell us, *that God has not granted you so much Grace, as to be able to do such Things.* This is also a Cheat; seeing these are all Things that do not require much natural Strength, for a Child of ten Years can do them exactly.

§ 46. But all your Misery consists in this, that you have not yet, sufficiently comprehended the Necessity of denying yourself, and of subduing or mortifying corrupt Nature; and you reckon it a great Instance of Prudence to cherish it, and to afford it what it desires. I declare these Things, not to reprove or condemn you, but that the Eyes of your Understanding may be open'd, that you may see the State of your Soul and know the Truth of every Thing; lest when you go out of this World, you find yourself mistaken, for having still believed that you was going on in the Way of Salvation, while you are walking in that of Damnation, which is *that broad Way* which our Lord says, *leads to Destruction, and that many there be that walk in it.*

§. 47. This is evident, if we consider the Life of the Christians of this present Age, who, we see, follow in all
F Things.

Things, the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature, even as the Beasts do. And living thus they shall never see God, whom they have forsaken in this Life, that they may follow their Corruption; and therefore they shall be separated from him to all Eternity; In which their everlasting Damnation will consist. My Friend I have written to you this Letter, because you do not well understand me, when I speak to you, by Reason of your Deafness. But I do not write it for you only, but for all well-meaning Souls, who perish thro' Ignorance; because they know not the absolute Necessity there is to resist their corrupt Nature, that they may be saved; and that I might also shew them their Blindness, and the Deceitfulness of their Hearts, which very few discover before it be too late. For many go out of this World full of Hope to be saved, who, after Death, find themselves confin'd to eternal Damnation, for that they would not hearken unto, and obey the eternal Truth; which expressly declares (w), *That unless a Man be born again, he shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

§. 48. There are scarce any Christians who are ignorant of this Sentence pronounced by the Holy Spirit: yea, Men do utter, and read, and declare those very Words, and yet do not know wherein this Regeneration, that is so necessary, doth consist. Some place it in the good Desires of their Hearts; others in good Works; some in that they can talk well of Virtue, or that they gladly hear Preachers, or others who make a Profession of it. Some place Regeneration in forsaking the World, and separating one's self from it; others in Prayer and other pious Exercises. But believe me, all these Things,

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with many more, are only the Effects of the Deceitfulness of our Heart, which falsely persuades itself, that it has attain'd to Regeneration, when it is yet altogether cram'd with Self-love, and follows the Motions of its corrupt Nature, which most certainly, tho' insensibly, leads the Soul to Destruction. For when once one has resolv'd to work out his Salvation, and for this End has abandon'd the World, and gross outward Sins; he presently thinks he is sure of Salvation, tho' he trusts only to a broken Plank, which may Shipwreck him in the Midst of his Course, if he still live in Self-Love, and follow the Motions of his corrupt Nature, in which eternal Damnation doth consist.

§. 49. Wherefore I think, God has granted no small Favour to Men, in discovering to them, in these last Times, the Deceitfulness of their Hearts, the Wickedness of corrupt Nature, and the Way to be regenerated in the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*; seeing, for want of knowing these Things, all Men perish. It is true, I bring no new Law, nor new Gospel; yet as St. *John* says, *I bring a new Commandment*, but no other Commandment than what God gave unto Man from the Time he created him, namely (x), *to love God with all his Heart, with all his Soul, and with all his Strength.*

§. 50. I do not say that God distinctly pronounc'd these Words, after having created Man, but he spoke them substantially to Man, from the Instant he created him, by letting him see the Grace and Favours which he had bestowed upon him, having made him, as a little God, depending upon him only, and withal, having created all this beautiful Work for his Delight, and subjected to him so many excellent Creatures, over whom he was to rule.

(x) 1 *John* ii.

Now all this, and much more, being known by Man (whom God had created, that he might take his Delight with him) was not Man obliged to love such a Benefactor, so that there was no need that God, by an express Command, should enjoin this Love? Must not this LAW OF LOVE have been deeply enough imprinted in his Heart and Soul, without telling him, in express Terms; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength*, as God afterwards commanded *Moses* to tell him, because of the Fall and Frailty to which Man was reduced by Sin, being become forgetful of the Favours of his God? This Law of loving God, was imprinted in Man's Nature from his Creation, which is commonly called *the Law of Nature*, which inwardly obliged Man to love his God. And after this Law was in a Manner extinguished, or had lost its Vigor in Man, God of his infinite Goodness and Mercy did form a Law, that they might understand distinctly, by Words, the Obligation that Man had to Love his God, and this he commanded *Moses* to teach them.

§. 51: Therefore I can now say truly (as *St. John*) *that I bring no new Law, and likewise that I bring a new Law*; because the same LAW OF LOVE, which God gave unto Man at first, is now so buried in Oblivion, that it is no longer own'd. Yea, they who, among Men, call themselves God's Ambassadors, preach publicly, *That this Law of God cannot be observed*; so earnest are they to raze it out, and obliterate it, that Men forgetting it, may insensibly perish. Wherefore God, by this his last Mercy, hath sent me to publish again the same Law, because it is decreed, at the Throne of the divine Justice, *That none shall be saved, but they who die in the Love of God*. And because I declare these eternal Truths, they seek to kill me, they persecute

persecute and despise me, as if I brought a new and unheard-of Law, when yet this is the ancient Law of Nature, the written Law of *Moses*, and the Gospel Law, which Christ brought unto Men, in the last Times. So that of these *three Laws* together, I make but *one*, seeing they have but one and the same End, and all of them equally tend to shew Men the Obligation they have to love their God and Creator. Are these Heresies, as the Clergy-men now-a-days, are pleased to call them? Is not this a Christian Truth, to believe that Man is bound to love his God? And tho' there were no Scripture for it, would not Man's Reason dictate to him, that he ought always to love his Benefactor, whom even the Brute Beasts do love, and know those, who do them good? Is Man become more unnatural than a Beast, that he dare say he cannot love his God, so great a Benefactor, from whom he has received his Being, and all Things?

§. 52. It is like, my Friend, you believe also that you love God, and that you acknowledge all his Benefits towards you. But this Persuasion comes (like other Things) from the Deceitfulness of your Heart, which presumes in every Thing, that it has the Virtue, which it hath not. And if you desire to know whether you love God truly, you must observe carefully, whether you love yourself, or any other Thing out of God; for the Scripture says (y), *that no Man can serve two Masters, but he must love the one and hate the other*; that is to say, no Man can sincerely love God, while he loves himself, or any other created Thing: For God will have no divided Heart, nor distracted with other Loves. Therefore the Scripture ex-

(y) *Matth.* vi. 24.

pressly tells us (x), *that God must be loved with the whole Heart*, and that a Part of its Affections must not be set upon the Pleasures and Accommodations of this Life, to please the Palate, and the other natural Senses.

§. 53. For all this is a Kind of Adultery. Even as if a Woman married to a Husband, should love another as much, yea more than him. She would certainly deserve, in Justice and Equity, to be divorced from her lawful Husband: How much more then ought the Soul that violates its Faith to its God, to be divorc'd and rejected by him, who had chosen it from among all his other Creatures, to be his Spouse, that he might take his Delight with it, as the Scripture tells us in express Words (a), *My Delights are with the Children of Men*. And whereas this Soul, the Spouse of God, ought to take all its Pleasure in him; it rather delights in every other Thing that's unworthy of it, for we see some delight in pleasing their Palate, others in the Lusts of the Flesh; one delights in worldly Riches and Honours; another in fine Cloaths and many Servants, or in stately Houses and Gardens, costly Furniture and Equipage.

§. 54. Thus the Soul, violating its Faith to God, takes Delight and Pleasure in a Thousand Kinds of Trifles, and perishing Things, instead of having all its Affections fix'd upon God alone, who deserves to be loved for his boundless Perfection, which transcend all that's beautiful, good, wise and powerful, and who *does the Will of the Soul that loves*

(x) Deut. vi. 5.

(a) Prov. viii. 31.

him †. But this ungrateful Soul forgets and slights the Favours and Friendship of God, and sets itself to love Things so base, so vile, and so weak, which cannot afford it any true Contentment and Satisfaction. On the contrary, what it loves most, does oft-times give it more Trouble, Sorrow and Anguish, than Tranquility and Peace. This makes Man highly blame-worthy, for making so bad a Choice, in pitching upon Things so mean and abject, and of so short Continuance, whereupon to set his Affections, instead of chusing Things eternal. For we see God has made him capable of these, and worthy to love his God, if he will correspond with his Love, which is a Thing so reasonable, that we may be astonish'd to see, that so much as one Man loves any Thing besides his God, seeing there is nothing lovely but He.

§. 55. But Sin has so blinded the Soul, that it sees no longer its true Good, and thro' the Stupidity that Sin has brought upon its Spirit, it chuses its Misery for its Happiness; so that it discovers more Ignorance and Stupidity in its Conduct, than the Beasts do; for they, by natural Instinct, seek their own Good, and avoid their Hurt: Whereas Man does the quite contrary, and puts a greater Value upon temporal Pleasures, than on those Delights which are eternal. For every one knows, or at least ought to know, that he cannot enjoy two Paradises, and that he must not look for a Life of eternal Blessedness, when he chuses this World's Delights and Pleasures, whither Man is banish'd to do Penitence, and not to seek his Ease and Pleasure, of which he is unworthy, seeing he has turn'd away his Love from his God, and become his Enemy;

tho' yet corrupt Nature, and the Deceit of Man's Heart, makes him believe, that all good and beautiful Things are given by God, for the Delight of Man, which is most true, if Man had continued to be the Friend of God. But since he wilfully became his Enemy, these good and beautiful Things do not any more belong to him, nor can he any longer dispose of them at his Pleasure. Yea, he ought voluntarily to deprive himself of them, as being unworthy of them, because he has render'd himself incapable of inheriting the unspeakable and eternal Goods and Joy of a Father, whom he has so grievously offended: For it would not be just, that such a Prodigal and debauch'd Son, should inherit the Goods his Father has purchased for him with so much Care. It is just that the Father restrain'd such a Son, and that he allow him not the Liberty to dispose of his Goods, tho' those, by the Right of Nature, might have belong'd to him. It is fit that the Son, for his own Good, be denied this Privilege, since he would abuse it to his own Hurt. Thus also God doth curb corrupt Nature, and will not have it to enjoy and dispose at its Pleasure, of all the good and beautiful Things which he created for Man; but he requires that it rather humble itself, and count itself unworthy even of the Things that are necessary for its Sustentation; so far ought it to be from enjoying and delighting itself in the good and beautiful Things which God created for his Children, and not for the Wicked, or for those who abuse his Favours.

§. 56. In which many deceive themselves, when they say, that God has created for them, all that's good and beautiful in Nature. For this is most false; and they can enjoy nothing that is good and beautiful, but after the Manner that Thieves enjoy the Goods they have stolen from others. Thus the Wicked unjustly use good Meat,
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fine Cloaths and Ornaments, and all other delicious Things, which God created only for his beloved Ones, and not for those who set their Affections upon such mean Things, and embrace and love them, as if they were the great and last End, for which they were created; tho' by their Words, they profess, that they receive them with Thanksgiving.

§. 57. Which is as false as the Things already mention'd; for they cannot truly give Thanks to God for the Things which they think they deserve as of Right belonging to them, and which God has created for them: It is like indeed that the Delight they take in their sensual Satisfactions, hinders them from lifting up their Hearts to God, to thank him for the good and pleasant Things, which he gives them, and that they rather act like the Swine, which when under the Oak, are eating the Acorns which fall to them, are more taken up about seeking after them, and glutting themselves with them, than to look up to him who throws them down. Just so does the sensual Person, with respect to God, when he feeds on dainty Fare, or partakes of other Pleasures; He is more careful to fill his Belly and satisfy his Appetite, than truly to bless God. Seeing he who places his Affections out of God, is unmindful of him. For the Scripture tells us, *(b) That where your Heart is; there is your Treasure:* To shew, that he who has set his Affections upon Eating and Drinking, or other sensual Delights, hath there his Heart and his Treasure: And if such a one speak of God, it is with his Lips only; for the Heart cannot be divided into the Love of Objects, so different and distant from one another. But Man's Heart, being still deceitful, gives him false Per-

(b) Matth. vi. 21.

suasions, with such fair Appearances of Truth, that he himself believes that to be true which is false, and that he gives Thanks unto God, even when he is abusing his Favours, and turning away his Affections from his God, the Author of all Good, that he may set them on the pleasant Morsels of corruptible Food, which is no sooner down the Throat, but it stinks and is corrupted. And yet notwithstanding all these Evils and Ignorance, Man hopes to be saved, and to obtain a blessed Eternity. In this he will certainly be disappointed, and at Death he must be satisfied with the Paradise he chose in this World, and the fading and imperfect Delights that he would needs enjoy in this Life: This is the Portion that the sensual Man hath chosen, and it would be in vain for him to look for another, when he removes out of this World.

§. 58. Yea, he ought rather to blush for Shame and Confusion, that he should desire to be plac'd among so many blessed Souls, who during this mortal Life, embraced Penitence, mortified their Bodies, and resisted the sensual Appetites of their corrupt Nature, denying it even the least sensual Pleasure, and circumcising their Flesh for the Kingdom of Heaven; as all those have done who have obtain'd Salvation hitherto, and all who shall be saved, must do to the End of the World: For there is no other Way that leads to Salvation, but the Cross and Sufferings of Christ. This St. Paul confirms, when he says, *(c) That he knows nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* And if there had been any other Way of Salvation, Christ would undoubtedly have taught it us. But he speaks to us only of the Cross, of suffering Persecution for Righteousness sake, foretelling his Disciples, *That they should be persecuted,*

(c) 1 Cor. ii. 2.

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yea put to Death, for his Name; adding, *That the Servant is not better than his Lord; if they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also* †.

§. 59. But these carnal Persons, who will take their Pleasures in this World, have forgotten the Admonitions of Christ, or they persuade themselves, that he has suffered all these Things for them; and they promise to themselves an imaginary Paradise, which they shall never really obtain, since they sell it, that they may enjoy in this World, some Dainties for their Palate, a little Puff of Honour, or some filthy Pleasure; and truly they do much worse than *Esau* *, who sold his Birth-right for one Morsel of Meat; while these poor blinded Souls, thro' the Deceitfulness of their Hearts, sell their Part of Paradise for some vain Pleasure, that doth so quickly vanish, and ends in Bitterness, even oft-times in this present Life, as the Proverb is, *For one Pleasure, a Thousand Pains*: For, in truth, I never observed any Pleasure in this World, which did not end in Grief and Sorrows. And tho' many have the Experience of this, yet they will not cease to pursue and embrace those transitory Pleasures with the Loss of eternal Blessedness; which yet they are persuaded they shall obtain at last, after they have set themselves to gratify their corrupt Senses, and taken in this World, all the Ease and Pleasures they could have. In which they greatly deceive themselves; because the Righteousness of God renders, and still will render to every Man according to his Works; as the Scripture intimates, when it is said, *By thy Works thou shalt be judged, and by thy Works thou shalt be condemn'd*. It is

† *John xv. 20.*

* *Heb. xii. 16.*

not said according to your Imagination, or vain Hopes, or according to the Persuasion you have, that you shall obtain two Paradises, the one in this World, in the Pursuit of its Pleasures, and the other in the Kingdom of Heaven, where nevertheless *no unclean Thing doth enter*: But every Man shall be presented before the Judgment Seat of God, where it shall be said, *Behold the Man and his Works*.

§. 60. I know very well, that many imagine (as you likewise do, my Friend) that for one to follow his Appetites, in the Use of Meat and Drink, and to take his Ease and Conyeniency, and give other such Satisfaction to Nature, are not to be reckon'd among evil Works. But seeing I speak to Christians, who know the Scriptures, I wish they would consider well the Sentence given to the rich Glutton, thus, *(d) Remember that thou in thy Life time receivedst thy good Things, and likewise Lazarus evil Things: But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented*. The Scripture does not accuse this rich Man of any other evil Deeds, but such as all commit, who live according to corrupt Nature, who seek, in all Things, the finest, most pleasant and delicious, and most convenient, as this rich Man did, of whom the Scripture says, *That he was cloathed in Purple and fine Linnen, and fared sumptuously every Day* †. Lo, these are all the Crimes of which the Scripture doth accuse him, making no mention of any other Sin. This may well hinder any from thinking that they shall not be damp'd, for having gorgeous and costly Apparel, and faring sumptuously, as usually all those do, who have abundance of this World's Goods, since the Rich count it

(d) Luke xvi. 25.

† Luke xvi. 19.

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their Glory to live magnificently, as to their Apparel, Furniture, Retinue and Entertainment, according to their Quality. This is so common, that he would be esteem'd a penurious and covetous Wretch, who should not live thus plentifully, as to outward Accommodations, and good and delicious Fare. This is the broad Way that leads to Destruction, wherein truly many walk, because they do not sufficiently conceive, that all the sensual Pleasures, to which Men give themselves in this Life, shall, in the next, be punish'd with as many diverse Torments.

§. 61. This the holy Scriptures confirm, when speaking of the great Whore, they say (e), *How much she hath glorified herself, and liveth deliciously, so much Torment and Sorrow give her.* For my part, I think that a Man will be punish'd with as many Kinds of Torments, through all Eternity, as there were Kinds of Pleasures, in which he delighted himself here. The *Catholicks* express this in a Book intituled, *THE ART OF LIVING WELL, AND OF DYING WELL*; where, by Pictures, the several Torments are represented, which the Damn'd suffer in Hell. There they represent the Gluttons, and those who were given to delicious Fare, with their Tables full of Serpents, Toads, Lizards, Spiders, and other venomous Beasts, served up to them, which the Devil crams down their Throats, and withal, pour into them melted Lead and Cups of Poison. And the Leud and Luxurious, are represented quite naked, and upon them are fasten'd Serpents, which gnaw and bite their secret Parts, and wind themselves in and out of their Bellies, which they have rent, tearing out their Bowels. They who in this World, took Pleasure to dress and paint

(e) *Rev.* xviii. 7.

themselves, are represented with their Heads full of little Serpents, instead of Hair, which gnaw their Necks and their Cheeks, and crawl in and out at their Mouths, their Nostrils, and the Hollow of their Eyes. All which are frightful Pictures, with a great many more, which the Curious may see in the Book itself, which I do not look upon as Canonical in its Pictures, because the Pains of Hell cannot be pourtray'd; for they are greater than all this World's Torments put together. But as Poets are allow'd to make Emblems suitable to their Designs; so, in my Opinion, it is lawful for devout Men to represent their Thoughts by external Images and Pictures, to make those who are slow and dull in their Understanding, to conceive the horrid Pains, with which the Damn'd shall be tormented in Hell: Namely, that according as they were addicted to diverse Vices in this World, they shall, in like Manner, endure diverse Torments in Hell, and that according to the strictest Justice.

§. 62. God will not let any Sins go unpunish'd, nor any good Work unrewarded. Hence as a Soul is endued with Charity and the Love of God, it shall accordingly be exalted to different degrees of Glory. This our Lord insinuates, when he says (*f*), *In my Father's House are many Mansions*; that is, in Paradise there shall be as many Degrees of Glory, as there have been in this World of Virtue; and the more closely he has followed Christ in this World, he shall the more nearly approach unto him in his Glory, thro' all Eternity. Wherefore a Man ought to reckon himself more happy in bearing the Cross, and in being despised with Christ, than in possessing Wealth and Riches,

(f) John xiv. 2.

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whereby he may take his Ease and Pleasure, in this short and wretched Life, seeing the Delights of this temporal Paradise, cannot afford the least Degree of that Joy and Contentment, which holy and blessed Souls shall inherit thro' all Eternity.

§. 63. This is easy to be comprehended, when once this is laid down for an eternal Truth, that there is no Good but in God alone, and that there cannot be a greater Evil, than in the Privation of all Good; in which all die, who take their Delight in this World. To such God will pronounce this fearful Sentence (g), *Depart from me all ye that Work Iniquity; or, Go ye cursed into everlasting Fire*: Thus driving from him, all those who chuse to take their Delight in any other Thing, than in God alone, to love whom they were created. But sensual Men are affected only with present Things, and cannot conceive the Joys of a blessed Eternity, for which only they were created. They prefer a small sensual Pleasure, to those eternal Joys that shall never End; and thus they shall have no Paradise, neither in this World, nor in that which is to come. For tho' they seek to have full Contentment in this World, they shall never find it: For our Souls being divine, can be satisfied with nothing but God alone; and seeing in this World they have not sought after those eternal Delights, they shall never find them, but at Death shall see themselves deprived both of the one Paradise and the other; for then they can no longer enjoy their temporal Pleasures, for which, nevertheless, they have lost those that are Eternal.

(g) *Matth. xxv. 41.*

§. 64. Thus the wretched Soul, perceives, too late, the bad Choice it has made, and bewails its Misfortune with a desperate Anguish, wishing rather it had suffer'd in this World, all Kind of Miseries, than to have enjoyed any the least Pleasure in it. But all is vain, since its Time of Penitence is over, which cannot be recall'd. It must suffer the Torments which its Pleasures have brought upon it; neither can it avoid them, nor substitute any in its Place, but must hear this Sentence (b), *Wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger.*

§. 65. Hence also it appears, that in Hell there shall be diverse Torments, seeing for Fulness they shall have Hunger, and without doubt, the Damned shall inherit all the Evils, which Sin hath brought upon all Things. This Curse will be the Lot of the Damned, who assuredly shall feel the burning and Smoke of Fire, the Storms and Tempests of the Air, the violent Floods and raging of the Waters, the pricking of the Thorns and Thistles, which the Earth brings forth. These Souls shall, no doubt, feel the Wounds and Cutings of Iron, the Blows and Bruises of Wood, and Bitings and Tearings of Beasts: For none of these Things, nor any Malignity that is in Nature, came from God. These are all the Works of wicked Men, who have deformed and disfigured the Works of God, which he created so good and beautiful. It is most reasonable therefore that he who has done Evil, should bear the Pains and Miseries of it. For who can be obliged to bear the Evil that another has done? It would be unjust that the Righteous should suffer for the Guilty, and bear the Punishments due to the Malefactor: And since Evil:

(b) Luke vi. 25:

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having once a Being, must have its Place of Subsistence, of necessity it must dwell for ever, in the Souls of those who were the Authors of it. This is that which makes their Hell.

§. 66. For where should those go, who have chosen their Paradise in this World, and would needs please themselves in gratifying the Lusts of their corrupt Nature? In Heaven surely they could not stay; for in it there is no Corruption, or sensual Delight. There they do not talk of Lasciviousness, nor carnal Pleasures, nor of delicate Fare, nor of delicious Wines, nor of any other Pleasures, which do gratify corrupt Nature: But the Blessed in Paradise, take all their Delight in God alone, and there they drink full Draughts of the Nectar of his Love, and their most delicate Fare, lies in the accomplishing of his divine Will: In which sensual Souls took no Pleasure in this World; and therefore they shall never enjoy it in Eternity. They shall flee to Hell, to seek Companions like themselves, and there they shall find a huge Company of sensual Souls, such as they themselves are, which the more numerous they are, will so much the more encrease their mutual Pains and Torments, by the desperate Howling, Anguish and Confusion, which is to be met with in Hell, in the Society of the Damned; where, instead of loving and helping one another, they shall vex and torture one another, and belch forth Curses against God, who created them. This makes sad Musick, for those who delighted themselves in Melody, in this World. So that all the Senses of those who delighted themselves in corruptible Things, shall, in Hell, have their particular Torments.

§. 67. Wherefore that Man is very unwise, who takes his sensual Delights here as much as he can; seeing he must

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endure

endure Torments in Hell, in Proportion to the Pleasures, wherewith he has studied to gratify his Senses here. This the Scripture testifies, in the forecited Words, concerning the Whore, of whom it is said (i), *How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much Torment and Sorrow give her.* So that it were the Interest, even of a wicked Man, to abstain from the Pleasures of this Life, that he might not encrease his Torments and Sorrow hereafter, and to cease from Sin, even tho' he knew he were to be damned, that he might lessen his Pains hereafter, which will be measured out, according to the many or few Sins, committed in this World. How much more ought a Man to abstain altogether from Sin, that he may obtain eternal Blessedness, and wholly escape the Torments of Hell?

§. 68. I think, my Friend, you may sufficiently perceive by this Letter, how greatly Sin hath corrupted the Nature of Man, and that none can follow this Corruption, without damning and destroying his own Soul; nor can any inherit the Kingdom of God, unless he War against, and overcome this Corruption, which is the Enemy of God; and that he who chuseth his Paradise in this World, by following his Ease and Pleasures, is cruel to himself, and an Enemy to his own Happiness. It is your Part now to consider, if you will continue to follow your corrupt Nature (as you have done hitherto;) or if you will combat it by denying it what it loves most, and giving it what is most contrary to it: As an eminent Person gave Advice to good Men, saying to them, *Hate what you love most. Cease to do that which you are inclin'd to do; that is, if*

(i) Rev. xviii. 7.

you desire to please God, you must always do what is opposite to Nature. But you do the quite contrary; and you say, *that you cannot do that which is repugnant to your Nature.* You say also, that all Things which seem good to Nature are useful, and that you cannot do that which is not agreeable to you. As if you had absolutely resolv'd to follow, in all Things, the Motions of your Corruption, and not to restrain it in any Thing. In the mean Time, you think you do well, and that you shall be saved at last; and you do not perceive that the Devil seduces you, and your own Heart deceives you, that you may go on insensibly to eternal Damnation: For none shall be saved but by Christ, and he teaches all Christians to *deny themselves.* And elsewhere he says (k), *that he that saves his Life, shall lose it; and he that loses his Life, the same shall find it:* As if he said, that he who is so careful of his Health, in taking his Ease and Pleasures, shall assuredly lose his Soul: And he who even loses his Life, to overcome his Corruption, shall save his Soul in a Life of eternal Bliss: For it is also written (l), *that unless a Grain of Corn die, it bringeth not forth Fruit.* It is necessary then, that this Corruption of Man, be crushed and killed by the Mortification of the Senses, else the Soul shall never arrive at Salvation, nor bring forth Fruits worthy of Repentance.

§. 69. Wherefore, my Friend, do not suffer yourself to be seduced any longer by false Appearances: For you are out of the Way of Salvation, so long as you follow your natural Inclinations, seeing it is written (m), *That Flesh*

(k) *Matth. x. 39.*

(l) *John. xii. 24.*

(m) *1 Cor. xv. 50.*

and Blood shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And it can be nothing but Flesh and Blood, that makes you seek so earnestly your Ease and Conveniencies, while you still complain that you have not enough of them. For sometimes your Chamber is too light, sometimes it is too dark; sometimes your Bed has an ill Smell, and the Cloaths are too heavy, the Sheets are not clean enough, a Mouse disturbs you; there is hardly any Meat that pleases your Taste; the Sugar-sops they bring you, are not sweet enough, and you must have more Sugar; And no sooner is any little Business recommended to you, as to gather the Beans in the Garden, but presently you make as if you were sick, and you desire to live idly, or to do that only which is pleasing and agreeable to corrupt Nature: In short you are a Man altogether sensual: For if you were a regenerate Person, as you believe you are, you would be void of all those carnal Desires and Cares; you would take all in good Part, esteeming yourself unworthy, even of necessary Things; you would rather serve than be served, and rather work than sit idle. For my part, I do this with a willing Heart, and wish I could labour six Times more to help my Neighbour. And so far am I from taking Pleasure in Meat and Drink, and in other Things that are pleasing to Nature; that all these Things are rather troublesome to me: I use them with Regret, and only for Necessity. For it would be impossible for a regenerate Soul, to take any Delight in earthly Things; these rather oppress it, like a heavy Burthen; Wealth, Honours and Pleasures, are a Burthen to it; It even desires, with *St. Paul*, to be delivered from the Bondage of this present Life, that it may fly to its God, trampling under Foot the Delights of this World, as Things unworthy of it, and which are so far from being delightful, that they are hateful to it.

§. 70. By this we may discern, the State of a Soul, truly regenerated, from one who still lives according to the Inclinations of corrupt Nature; according as one is delighted in the Pleasures of this Life, or as he despises and rejects them, even tho' he might lawfully have them. For one that is regenerated does no longer seek after any Thing in this World; this the Apostle confirms, when he says (n), *If you be risen with Christ, seek those Things which are above, and not the Things which are upon the Earth.* This he inculcates unto Christians, that they may not let themselves be seduced, by the Deceitfulness of their Hearts, which persuades them to believe that they are regenerate, while they still seek after the Pleasures and Riches of this Life. And that these Persons may try themselves aright, the Apostle tells them, that the Mark or Touchstone, which makes it appear whether the Regeneration be true or false, is, that every one search to the Bottom of his own Heart, and see, *whether he seeks any Thing more in this World, and whether all his Thoughts and Cares be diverted toward Things heavenly and eternal.* If so, he may be persuaded, that he belongs to the blessed Society of the Regenerate, and no otherwise. For he who is yet desirous to have a fine House, costly Furniture, a soft Bed, Meat to please his Taste, and the other Delights of his Senses, Wealth, or Honours, or Attendants, and the other Things with which Nature is delighted, he cannot truly affirm or believe, that he is a regenerate Person, seeing he yet seeks those Things that are upon Earth, and not those Things which are above, and which are eternal.

§. 71. I can say truly, that I have found, by my own Experience, that as soon as the holy Spirit did fully possess

(n) Col. iii. 1.

my Soul, all the Things which I loved in this World were shut out of my Heart and Affections. And the Love of God dissolved in me, all Love of earthly Things, as the Snow is melted before the Sun or the Fire: So that I cannot say, in Truth, that my Affections are now plac'd upon any Thing on Earth: Yea, I am no longer fond or desirous of Health or Life, but am entirely resign'd to God, that he may govern me at his Pleasure. Thus I am always content, and I never wish for that which I have not: And if it happen that I have a good Lodging, and the Conveniences of Life, I use them; neither do I, as the Hypocrites, who will not wear such Cloaths as are generally used, nor dwell in Houses that are well built, but outwardly they reject all good and fine Things, to shew their Virtue and Holiness; which is nothing but a Shew, consisting in a distinct Sort of Apparel, and such outward Trifles. No, I seek neither Poverty, nor Riches, nor good Fare, nor that which is common: But I take all that's given me from the Hand of God: If it is good, I take it as such; and if it does not taste agreeable, I take it to nourish my Body, without any Choice, being content with every Thing: And when it happens that I must lie in a nasty Garret, or a Stable, I do not murmur at it; but I am as contented to lie upon the hard Floor, as on a soft Bed, when there is Occasion for it. I am as well pleased with Sickness, as with Health. When God is pleased to afflict me, I accept of it, for the Purification of my Soul; and when he comforts me, I praise him for it. Thus I still find Matter of Contentment, because I have no longer any Desire or Will of my own. Nothing can be wanting to me, since I desire nothing but that which I have. My Soul is content and satisfied with it, without desiring more, and in this State, I find a Foretaste of Paradise, consisting in a Contentment, and quiet of Mind and Conscience, which

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which quenches the Desire of any earthly Thing, and gives me Tranquility and Peace, in all Kind of Events. Whereas I see those poor Souls, who will needs do their own Will, and follow the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature, still restless and dissatisfied, melancholy and vex'd, because they have not what they desire; troubled that they have not Wealth and Honour according to their Wish; envying others those Advantages; impatient in Adversity or Sickness; still seeking Satisfaction, and never finding it. Thus I had a Sister, who studied in all Things to please herself, and I never saw her content. She had indeed wherewith to afford all Sort of Conveniency, Rest and Delight to her Body; and yet truly, she enjoyed none of these. She never slept soundly, being still afraid to be contemned, or lose the Honour that she thought was due to her. And for Pleasure, she went and visited several Cities and Country Places, whence she reap'd nothing but Weariness, and little Satisfaction. And she spared nothing, that she might please her Taste; she contrived daily, some new Thing to excite her Appetite; and she no sooner once tasted it, but she disgusted it, and turned it to some other Thing. And thus this poor Soul studied continually to gratify her five natural Senses; and yet could never please them; for the more she had, she still desired the more. So that I consider'd her Life here, as the Beginning of her Hell; for I cannot imagine a greater Torment, than that of an unquiet and never satisfied Mind, when all its pretended Pleasures, give it no Content, but only amuse the Senses for a small Moment, and so soon as that momentary Pleasure is gone, it leaves behind it, Sadness and Melancholy. I would have often comforted her, but in vain, for Melancholy had still the Ascendant, till she run to new Diversions, and these brought on more Sadness. And thus this poor Soul remain'd discontented till Death, after
having

having pursued, in vain, with great Earnestness, all sort of Pleasures and Satisfaction. From this, all those may take Warning, who chuse their Paradise in this World, where they find nothing but a temporal Hell, the Fore-runner of that which is eternal.

§. 72. I wish, my Friend, you may become wise, by the Example of others, and that you would firmly believe, that your Life is not Christian, and that you are not truly regenerate ; but that you indulge your sensual Appetites, and seek your Ease and Pleasure, chusing always for yourself, the best and the finest of every Thing, as much as you can. Perhaps the Devil persuades you, that this is your Duty; and that you ought to have the best Place and Accommodations, and consequently the best Fare, and the best Service, because you are a spiritual Person, for whom all good and beautiful Things were created. I know others like you, who imagine there was nothing which they did not merit, because of their Virtue ; among others, I knew a Country Girl, who wore white Sattin, and would eat of nothing but the most delicious Fare ; for she said, *they were treated for her, and not for the Wicked.* This Persuasion came from the evil Spirit, and from corrupt Nature, which still flatters itself to its own Ruin. For where was there ever one more spiritual, more holy, and more perfect in this World, than Christ, to whom every beautiful and good Thing is due ? And yet he chose the meanest, and most despised Things, for his own Use. For where could he have a meaner Mother, than the poor Virgin *Mary* ? Or a meaner nursing Father, than a Carpenter ? Where could there be a more contemptible, and inconvenient House for him to be born in, than a Stable ? Where more abject Persons could be pitch'd upon, to visit him at his Entry into the World, than poor Shepherds ? He who
might

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might have chosen for himself, the greatest Kings and Emperors of the Earth, with the most stately Palaces in the World, with soft Beds, and such like Conveniences, contents himself with a little Hay, and a Manger for his Pavilion. And who sees not, that he sought not his Ease and Quiet in this World, when he labour'd and travell'd so much for the Benefit of Men? His Fare was Bread and Fish, broil'd on the Coals on the Ground, as it is told in the Gospel, *That he fed Multitudes of Men, Women and Children, with Bread and Fishes.* And when his Disciples provided Victuals for him, it was Bread only, and not dainty Morsels, or Sauces suited to the Taste of corrupt Nature. For they did not carry about with them, neither Pots nor Frying-Pans, nor Fat nor Cream, nor a Cauldron for Brewing, nor a Wine-press for their Grapes. They were contented to make the Fire upon the Ground, and then broil the Fishes, which they had caught in the Sea. Hence it abundantly appears, that Christ did not lead a soft and sensual Life, as the Christians of this Age believe they may do, and that they may chuse the finest and the best of every Thing, for their Use: By which, they become Antichristians, since their Words, Doctrine and Lives, directly contradict the Sayings, Doctrine, and Life of Christ, who said unto them, *Be ye Followers of me; Follow me. (o) I am the Way; by me, if any Man shall enter, he shall be saved: I am the Door, no Man cometh to the Father, but by me.*

§. 73. But Men now-a-days, have invented Doctrines contrary to that of Christ, and they would lead to Salvation, by another Way, than that in which our Lord *Jesus*

walk'd, and wherein he taught Men to follow him: They wrest the true Meaning of the Gospel, by their Glosses and Explanations; so that it must be quite cross'd out and cancell'd, before one can believe the Coiners of those new Doctrines. And when the Gospel is truly represented to them, in its genuine Simplicity, they say, *That these Things ought not to be observed now in this Age*; as if God were mutable, and had changed his Thoughts, since the Time that Christ taught us this holy Gospel, as the last Remedy, appointed for our Maladies, after which we must not look for another, for he came in the last Times. It still was, and ever will be necessary for Salvation, to the End of the World, to observe in Substance, the Doctrine of the Gospel, the only Scope and Aim, whereof, is to recover Men again, unto the LOVE of GOD, which is the first and great Commandment, without which there is no Salvation, as I have clearly shewn, in the Beginning of this Letter.

§. 74. And I bring no new Thing, neither do I desire to make a new Gospel, but I represent to Christians, the same Gospel, which was given them from God, by *Jesus Christ*, in the Beginning of the Primitive Church, when Men were taught by our Saviour, how they must be born again into the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*, that they may become new Creatures; putting off the Garment of the old *Adam*, that they may be cloathed with the New, which is *Jesus Christ*. For as *Adam*, had undone us all by his Fall, so *Jesus Christ* has recover'd us all out of this Perdition, by his Evangelical Doctrine, which we must follow, and into which our Hearts and Lives must be transform'd, if we would be saved, without hearkening to the Glosses and Doctrines of deceitful Men, (p) *Who shut the*

Kingdom of Heaven against others, neither will they ever enter into it themselves.

§. 75. I know very well, that those Pedants, and pretended Scholars, make the People believe, that *I set up Heresies and new Doctrines*, tho' this is most false: For I desire nothing of any Man, but that he would follow in Practice, the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, which is neither New nor Heretical. But these Scholars call every Thing *Heresy*, that does not afford them temporal Advantage; and they call every Thing *Piety and Virtue*, that fills their Purses, and makes the Pot boil; so strangely are Men become Liars and Seducers of Souls, as the Apostle foretold, that *they should come in the latter Times* (in which we now live) wherein the Seduction is the more perilous, the more it is covered with Piety and Devotion, *for deceiving even the Elect*, as the Scripture saith.

§. 76. And when I saw that so many perish'd thro' Ignorance, being seduced by those who call themselves Ambassadors from God, I resolv'd to publish this Treatise of *the Renovation of the Gospel Spirit*, which flatters no Body, but points out the true Meaning of the Gospel, to those who would put it in Practice; for they who will not practice it are not capable of understanding it, or of conceiving its true Meaning. To such I will not offer *this hidden Treasure*, or *this Pearl of great Price*; but only to those who desire to become true Christians, and to none else: For this would be *to give the Childrens Bread to the Dogs, and to cast Pearls before Swine* (q), which I will not do, for *Jesus Christ* has forbidden it. I wait for Souls disposed to obey,

(q) *Matth. vii. 6.*

and practise the Doctrine of the Gospel. For my Writings will serve for a greater Condemnation, to those who have them, or may have them; for then they cannot pretend Ignorance, after having read them; because they explain more clearly the Doctrine of the Gospel, than it is express'd in the Gospel itself, or in any other Authors, who in diverse Manners, have spoken or written of Evangelical Perfection.

§. 77. Wherefore none can perish any longer, thro' Ignorance, seeing God now so plainly declares the Ends for which he created Man, the Graces and Privileges he gave him at his Creation, and how Man, of his own Choice, lost all these Gifts and Favours, and by his Sin, has made himself more miserable than the very Beasts are, in their brutish Nature. But that which is most valuable, and chiefly to be regarded, is, that God now imparts to Men so clear a Light, for discovering the Way that leads strait to the Harbour of Salvation, by which Christ walk'd; and *thus enter'd into his Glory*; so that none can any longer be ignorant of what they must do to be saved, while they see that Christ has, in so particular a Manner, done and taught all Things necessary, that nothing more remains for Christians to know or ask. This is the Time of which the Scripture speaks (r), *When a Man shall say no more to his Brother, Know the Lord; for all shall know him*: That is, all they who desire in Sincerity to receive the Truth. They shall see, by these Writings, that there is no other God, but he whom I know; nor other Truth, but that which I declare; nor any other Way of Salvation, but that wherein I walk; and that my Doctrine is not mine,

but the true Doctrine of Christ, which the Lord himself taught Christians; and that I am very far from teaching Heresies, or pernicious Doctrines, as those Scholars would persuade the ignorant People. (who have no Knowledge of divine Truths) that they may draw them to themselves, seeking nothing but Glory and Gain from Men, even to the Prejudice of the Salvation of their Souls, which those Masters have less Regard for, than for their temporal Advantages.

§. 78. Hence they have contrived so many Glosses, Distinctions, and false Reasonings, whereby to obscure the Doctrine of the Gospel, that this is no longer put in Practice, while every one imagines, according to the Sentence of these Doctors, that it's impossible to keep the Gospel-Law, tho' *Jesus Christ* said, *Take my Yoke upon you, for it is easy, and my Burthen light.* Men now-a-days are become so blind, by the Glosses of the Learned, that they give more Faith, to their lying Reasonings, than to the infallible Truths of Christ himself. Which proceeds from this, that being desirous to live according to the Inclinations of corrupt Nature, they find the Doctrine of Men more agreeable to this, than the Doctrine of Christ, which is directly contrary to this corrupt Nature.

§. 79. For the whole Gospel is nothing but a Weapon, or Sword, wherewith to combat, yea to kill this old Man, that the new Man, which is the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*, may live again in place thereof: For he saith (*J*), *Unless ye be born again, of Water, and of the Spirit, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Now none can be born a-

gain, unless he first die: And thus also none can be born again into the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*, if he is not first dead to the Desires of his corrupt Nature. It is vain to hope for it, and Folly to believe it. Of Necessity Death (which is Corruption) must be utterly thrust out, before the true Life enter into a Soul, which can never live to Grace, if its corrupt Nature is not mortified, yea, and intirely dead to itself. And this Corruption cannot be mortified nor overcome, but by the Practice of the Gospel-Law, which opposes and overcomes all the Inclinations of corrupt Nature. This is the only Reason for which Christ brought us this divine Law, as a wholesome Poison to destroy this old Corruption, and an Antidote against the Evil which may happen to our Souls, during this mortal Life, while some are so wretched as to affirm, *That the Gospel-Law cannot be kept.*

§. 80. These are the false Prophets, of whom the Scripture warns us, *That we ought to beware of them, and not let ourselves be deceived by them.* I know indeed (and to my great Sorrow) that they have already seduced many; but I hope they shall no longer seduce those who shall comprehend the Truths contain'd in my Writings, seeing *they are the Seed of the Woman, which must bruise the Head of the Serpent.* Certainly those false Teachers have had the evil Spirit for their Master, who hath suggested to them so many false Sophisms and false Reasonings, whereby Men are deceived: And that old Serpent who tempted *Eve* to *know good and Evil*, does now tempt those learned Scholars and Doctors, to search after vain, false and frivolous Knowledge: For I think, that in Colleges and Universities, they study nothing so much as to make Falshood pass for Truth, and Truth for Falshood; and when they have learn'd to do This dextrously, they get the Degree of Master, Bachelor, or Doctor, and pass for learned Men, tho'

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tho' as to their own, and the Peoples Salvation, they are great Ignorants, yea ill Men, who wickedly mislead others.

§. 81. For many of these cannot but know, that they do not teach the People the real Truth of the Gospel, but wrest and darken it by their Glosses, that they may suit their Doctrine to the Looseness of the People. But this will not excuse them before God ; however they may think they do well, to accommodate themselves to the Weakness of the Men of this Age. But if they would search to the Bottom of their Consciences, to know the Reason why they thus accomodate themselves to the World, they would assuredly find, that this is only to preserve Mens Favour and Friendship, and that they may have from them, wherewith to live a soft and easy Life in this World. For if they would preach the Truth, they could not continue to live plentifully, to provide such stately Houses and fine Furniture, and to have their Tables furnish'd with such delicious Fare : Then they must quit those Excesses, and be contented with Necessaries only. This they will not hear of ; but they love rather to get Money, by amusing People, than to be out of Favour with Men, by preaching the Truth to them. This is indeed very lamentable, that they prefer their Gain, their Ease, their Honour and Pleasure in this World, to their own and other Mens Salvation ; yet the chief Guides of the People do this now-a-days.

§. 82. For there are many, who not only dissemble, gloss away, and wrest the Truth of the Gospel, that they may please Men, and for fear of losing their Offices and Benefices ; but they persecute the Truth, wheresoever it appears. This I know, by my own Experience : For I no sooner began to publish the Truths, manifested to me by God, than the Priests of all Sects and Religions, rose up against me,

me, loaded me with Reproaches and Contempt, pursued me to Imprisonment, yea to Death, if I had been in their Power. They robb'd me of my Books, to the Value of Thousands, made me to be condemn'd to perpetual Imprisonment, yea, the *Lutheran Priests of Flensbourg*, caused my Books to be burnt publickly, in the Market-Place of that Town; by the Hand of the Hangman, for no other Reason, but that they contain'd the Truths of God, and taught Men to observe the Gospel-Law. For no Body can discover evil Things in my Writings, they being indicted by the Holy Spirit, who is Sanctity itself. But those angry Preachers would extinguish this Holy Light, fearing least it cros them in their Purpose of reigning in this World, of having Dominion over the People, and of treasureing up of Wealth; in which my Writings do not favour them. They cry out, therefore, as the *Jews* did against Christ, *Away with him, away with him, crucify him*. And if it be said to them, What Evil hath this Maid done? Shall we kill one of a good Life, who declares the Truth of the Gospel. As the Judge said to the People, *Shall I crucify your King?* And the People answered, *They had no King but Caesar*. Thus also, if those Preachers would speak Truth, they will answer, *We have no other Gospel, but that which we gloss and interpret for our own Profit, that we may draw the People after us, and may be maintain'd by them*. Behold the wretched State of the Christian World now-a-days, wherein the Clergy are not satisfied not to follow the Truth themselves, but they labour also, to keep others from embracing it, like unto the Devil, who is not pleased to be miserable alone, but draws in as many as he can, to be Partners in his Misery. I can say truly, that those Clergymen persecute me for Righteousness sake; for I never in my Life, did Things blameable before Men; yea, those Preachers in *Holstein*, my Enemies, were obliged, oft-times,

to preach publickly, *That I led a pious Life, and that those of my Company were good People, who lived soberly and chastely, and in all Things behaved themselves modestly and honestly.* Not that they gave this Testimony from a Spirit of Justice and Truth; but they found themselves obliged to do it, because so many good People in that Country, had seen our Behaviour, we having tarried there about seven Years, and were much edified with our Manner of Living. They no doubt would have blam'd those Preachers, for persecuting honest and good People.

§. 83. For this Cause, they spoke well of us, as to our Manners; but they added, that my Doctrine was full of Heresies, that by this Means, they might blind well-meaning People, who could not judge aright, as to Doctrine, they falsly affirming to them, *That I deny the Merits of Jesus Christ, and the most holy Trinity,* and that I teach a great many other ill Things, of which I am altogether Innocent. For if I denied the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, I would not stir up Men to imitate and follow him, that they be Partakers of his Merits: And I would not declare it necessary for Salvation, to embrace the Doctrine of the Gospel, if I rejected or despised the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, who taught us this Doctrine.

§. 84. For if the Merits of *Jesus Christ* saved Men, after the Manner they teach now-a-days, his whole Law and Precepts would be to no Purpose: yea, he would have suffer'd and died without giving any such Precepts to Men, for there was no need of them, when *Jesus Christ* would satisfy all for them, without any Co-operation on their part. This had been a new Creation of Man, not a Regeneration of him, which supposeth a Thing already generated; but being fallen away or corrupted, must be

again restored and repaired ; which Reparation cannot be done, without the Concurrence and Co-operation of the Thing already created : For it is most true, that God who created us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves. How then should the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, save us without ourselves ; seeing even God, by his Almighty Power, cannot save us without our Co-operation, after he would once have us free Creatures ; for he never retracts what he has once willed ? Wherefore all the Glosses and Arguments, which Men do frame now-a-days, about the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, are the Forgeries and Deceits of corrupt Nature, which flatters itself to its own Ruin, since Men have lost the Light of Truth whereby to know, that *Man was created for no other End but to love God*. For we see that they who look to be saved by the Merits of *Jesus Christ* alone, live and die in Self-love, and seek after the Pleasures and good Things of this wretched Life, as much as they can, and boldly hope for Salvation, while they resist all the Designs and Purposes, which God had in the creating of Man. This is so gross a kind of Ignorance, that it is a Wonder how so much as one Man could entertain those Opinions, without discovering their Falshood. For it would have been to no Purpose, for Christ and his Apostles to have preach'd and taught so much, if his Merits only, might and could save Men, There would have been no need to preach the Gospel, nor to write the Bible, and other good Books, nor to know what Christ did and taught. It would have sufficed Men, to have conceived, in their corrupt Imagination, that Christ had satisfied all for them, and thus, in a fantastical Way, to have applied to themselves his Merits. I cannot believe that they who entertain such Opinions, can die in Peace, unless they be intirely given up by God, unto the Spirit of Fear, and the Devil give them a false Quiet, till passing
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out of this Life, they be tortur'd with double Torments hereafter, to all Eternity.

§. 85. I had a Mind, my Friend, to tell you all these Things, not for your Sake only, but for all those, who follow (as you do) the Motions of their corrupt Natures, that they may learn to know themselves, and may not let themselves be trick'd and impos'd upon by Satan, or by wicked Men, who second him in hindering the Salvation of their Souls. Believe me, seeing I speak Truth, and assert by a Command from God, that never any was, is, or shall be saved, unless he die in the LOVE OF GOD, and that no Man lives in *the Love of God*, who lives in Self-love. Wherefore Men must lift up the Head, and hear what God saith to them, in these last Times, namely, (1) *Awake thou that sleepest; arise from the Dead, and Christ shall give thee Light.* You are one of those dead ones, and many such as you. It concerns you all to consider, whether you will chuse to perish in the Darkness of Death, or to arise out of it: For the Time is come, of which the Prophet spoke, saying, (2) *Darkness hath covered the whole Earth, and gross Darkness the People:* But withal, he gives great Comfort to those, who sincerely labour to become the People of God, saying, (3) *But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his Glory shall be seen upon thee.* The Prophet speaks neither to *John*, nor to *Peter*, For with God there is no Respect of Persons; but he speaks particularly, to all those who desire to become the Children of God, ceasing to be the Children of Wrath and Perdition, that they may become the Disciples of *Jesus*

(1) *Eph. v. 14.*

(2) *Isa. lx. 2.*

Christ. These shall receive the Light of Truth, and shall enjoy the Glory of the Lord: But not they who follow still, the Sensualities of corrupt Nature, dare yet Promise to themselves Salvation by the Merits of Christ, and apply his Merits to themselves, which do not at all belong to them: (x) *For he who is not born again into the Spirit of Jesus Christ, shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,* whatever he may fancy or imagine to himself, or howsoever he may strive to apply to himself the Merits of Christ. This will avail him nothing in the Day of Judgment, when it shall be said, *Behold the Man and his Works:* And not, *Behold the Man and his fine Speculations, or frivolous Application of the Merits of Christ.* The Matter itself, must be search'd into, and it must be seen if a Man has truly put on the the Wedding Garment of the Spirit of Christ, without which *he shall be thrust out from the Marriage-Feast, and cast into outer Darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* But for the Souls that seek truly, to be converted unto God, and embrace a Gospel Life, the Light of Truth is arisen upon them, to make known all Truth, and the Glory of the Most High shall cover them, which shall fill them with all Kind of Delights and Glories, as the Prophet hath foretold, (y) *for they shall be People of God, he will guide them, and make them to lie down in green Pastures.* But how few Souls are there now-a days, thus dispos'd to let themselves be led and govern'd by the holy Spirit, so as that they may be truly call'd God's People?

§. 86. I know very well, my Friend, that you will tell me, you are of that Number, and that you desire to sub-

(x) *John* iii. 3.

(y) *Psal.* xxiii.

jest yourself to be directed and led by God; which is most false, so long as you (with so many others) do yet follow the Inclinations of Corrupt Nature. All these Professions are false, and your Words and Discourses are affected, and contrived thro' Hypocrisy, that you may be thought to have the Virtue which you have not. This God will not suffer. For this it was, that Christ in the Gospel, utter'd so many Woes against the *Pharisees*, who boasted of the Virtue which they had not. How often did he proclaim, *Wo, wo to you, who are like to whited Sepulchres, which indeed appear outwardly beautiful, but are within, full of dead Men's Bones, and of all Ucleanness (z).* The same Woes will, in the Day of Judgment, come upon all those, who now suffer themselves to be seduced with their own Imaginations, following the Suggestions of their deceitful Hearts, as the Scripture saith, *That Man's Heart is deceitful above all Things.* For my Part, I had rather see an open Sinner, than a holy Hypocrite; for there is more Hopes of the Conversion of a known and publick Sinner, than of a counterfeit Bigot, who deceives both himself and others, to his Ruin, without being sensible of it. His Mind is so blinded with thick Darkness, that he even desires not to have any other Light, than what he fancies he has. I can scarce hope, my Friend, for the Conversion of such, and of you; but may rather look for such Woes and Calamities, as our Lord threaten'd the *Pharisees* with in his Time.

§. 87. For truly he is a Hypocrite, who says that he loves God, when he loves himself, and is still weded to the Riches, Pleasures, and Conveniencies of this Life; since the *Love of God* is a certain Fire, that consumes all those

(z) *Matth.* xxiii. 27.

earthly Affections. It is impossible that a Soul, which truly loves God, can yet take its Delight in Eating, Drinking, Recreations, Apparel, or other earthly Goods and Pleasures, because it uses all these Things, as if it used them not, and oft-times makes Use of necessary Things with Regret: As they write, that Mother *Terese* did often weep when she was going to the Table, to take her Refreshment, saying to herself, *Must I always do the Actions of Beasts?* Thus they who love God, have an Aversion to the Pleasures and good Things of this Life, and delight themselves only in God, whom they love. But if you, my Friend, (with so many others who pretend to love God) would narrowly examine the Bent, and Motions of your Souls, and wherein they take Delight, you would assuredly discover that the greatest Part of your Inclinations is to delight yourself in good Fare, good Liquor, a soft Bed, and a convenient Lodging; and that you embrace all these Things with Delight and Pleasure; while in the mean Time, you fancy to yourself that you love God: Which Persuasion is false and deceitful; for the *Love of God* is incompatible with the Love of earthly Things. By which you (and all such as you) may see unto what Degree of the Love of God, you are already come; for this is the Touchstone, whereby one may discover the true Gold of the Love of God, from the false Gold of this imaginary Love, which oft-times appears more bright and shining, than the pure Gold of the *Love of God*; as a counterfeit Ducat appears sometimes to the Eye, more bright and glittering, than a Ducat of pure Gold, till it is rub'd upon the Touchstone, and then the Cheat is discover'd.

§. 88. I believe, my Friend, the same has happen'd to you, and that your deceitful Heart has persuaded you, e're you came to live with us, that you was possess'd of the

the *Love of God*, because this is honourable, and procures Esteem among Men. Of this you have Experience, whilst you see so many good People are helpful to you, who, out of the Esteem they have of your Virtue, do not suffer you to lack any Thing, and from Time to Time, send you Money in abundance, for your Subsistence. But this Bounty encourages you in Idleness and Sloth, and makes you desire still to have the finest and best of every Thing; neither will you be satisfied with the Meat and Drink, which even very rich Men are pleased with; who give Thanks to the Heavenly Giver of all Good, for those Things, which you have oft-times despised and slighted; as with Disdain, you rejected t'other Day, our Brother's Apron to wipe your Hands with, but called for a fine clean Handkerchief to be given you out of your Chest. Now, if I had not all these Circumstances, and particular Instances, to shew you of your Self-love and your Self-esteem, you would, no doubt, contradict the Truth of God, as you have done often heretofore, when I admonish'd you; saying, *That you appeal'd to the Judgment of God, and did not regard Mens Judgment, tho' more enlighten'd than you; That I might say what I pleas'd, but you knew very well what you ought to do: Tho' truly you do not know, that the Devil leads and governs you in all your Actions; while, in the mean Time, you are possess'd with the Imagination of your being virtuous, and that temporal Advantages accrue to you by this imaginary Virtue.*

§. 89. This will render your Conversion so much the more difficult, while, in the mean Time, you can never be saved (no more than others like you) except you be converted, and receive the Light of Truth, which now offers itself to all those, who are willing to receive it, and to none else; For that which Christ saith, is now fulfill'd in
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its full Sense and Meaning, viz. (a) *This is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men have loved Darkneſs rather than Light.* Thus all they who ſhall deſpiſe, and will not follow this laſt Light, are condemned already; becauſe they Love rather their Darkneſs (which has now overſpread the whole Earth) than the Light of Faith, which is now come into the World, and *which ſo many holy Prophets have deſired to ſee, and have not ſeen it.* Thoſe who now ſee it, and do nevertheless abide in their Darkneſs (becauſe it doth more flatter their Corruption) have already receiv'd their Sentence of Condemnation; neither can they look for any other Thing after Death, than eternal Damnation, ſince they would needs wilfully abide in their wandering Courſes, and in their Darkneſs.

§. 90. It concerns you, my Friend, and all thoſe who follow the Motions of corrupt Nature, to know, whether you deſire to be ſaved or damned, ſeeing you cannot be ſaved without embracing and following this Light of Truth; as you cannot be damned, but by following your own Darkneſs, and the Inclinations of your corrupt Nature. It is your Part to chuſe the one or the other. Behold Heaven and Hell, Salvation and Damnation, and you are plac'd in the Miſt; tell me which of them you will chuſe and follow, (b) *Since no Man can ſerve two Maſters, but he muſt hate the one, and love the other.* You cannot amuſe God with Words, as Men may amuſe one another; for by an immutable Decree, he has condemn'd thoſe who love their Darkneſs more than the Light; which Light is come into the World, to enlighten all thoſe who are willing to follow

(a) *John* iii. 19.

(b) *Matth.* vi. 24.

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it: I say, *are willing* to follow it, because God compels no Man, but leaves every one in that Liberty, in which he was pleased to create him.

§. 91. He who would die in the *Love of God*, ought to embrace the Means which Christ hath taught us, since there is no other Way that leads to Salvation, but that wherein he walked, which is the *Mortification of corrupt Nature*: This he practised, even to the Death of the Cross, and suffer'd so many Afflictions and Pains in Body and Spirit, that in the Extremity of his Anguish, he thought he was deprived of all Help, when he said, (c) *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* And tho' Christians know the History of this, and that our Lord said unto them (d), *I have done all these Things to give you an Example, follow me*; yet they will needs enter into Glory by some other Way, than that by which Christ himself walk'd, giving loose Reins to their sensual Appetites, and the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature, and yet withal imagine, that they shall be saved thro' the Merits of Christ, as if he had merited for supporting Man's Corruption, which is so much the Enemy of God, resisting his Purposes, and contradicting his most holy Will. Is not this an excellent Disposition for partaking of the Merits of Christ? Truly, my Friend, you must rid yourself of this Sentiment, and resolve to lead a Gospel-Life, if you desire to enjoy a blessed Immortality, seeing without this, none shall be saved, howsoever great, powerful, enlightned, or virtuous they may be: None shall enter into Paradise, but they who are cloathed with the Spirit of Christ. You ought not to

(c) *Matth.* xxvii, 46. 1 *Pet.* ii. 21.

(d) *John* xiii. 15,

flatter yourself to your own Ruin, with the Discourses and Glosses of Men, who would falsely apply to themselves the Merits of Christ, while they remain his Enemies, and act quite contrary to what has he taught us, and which he is pleased now again to teach us, by his holy Spirit, who now comes to lead us into all Truth, thus fulfilling the Prophe-tical Promise, which he made to his Apostles and Disciples, when he left them, and ascended up into Heaven (e). Upon us this LIGHT OF TRUTH is poured out, in so great abundance; and if we will embrace and follow it, we shall assuredly behold the GLORY of Christ, after having followed him in Reproaches and Sufferings; for there is no other Way to accompany him in his Glory. Many, it is likely, will be glad to hear those Things, which are spoken, concerning him in his Glory, because these are agreeable even to corrupt Nature, which greatly loves sweet and beautiful Things: But this is a vain Delight in those, who will not pass first by the Way of his Sufferings: By these only there is an Entry into his *Glory*, and by no other Doors or Windows; for all Entry into it, shall be shut against those, who shall follow their Ease and Pleasures in this World; to whom he will say, as to the foolish Virgins; *I know you not*; keeping the Door shut against them. For no Man shall abide in the *Glory* of Mount TABOR, if he has not first dwelt with Christ, upon Mount *Calvary*. This is an irrevocable Decree of God, which shall never be changed: namely, whosoever has sin'd, must be chastis'd; and he that would rejoice, must suffer.

§. 92. This has moved me to write this Book of the *Evangelical Spirit*, to the End, that every one may know

(e) *John* xiv.

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the true and sure Way to Salvation, that they may no longer trust to so many wrong Ways, by which Men now-a-days lead one another. For there is but one only Way, one only Truth, and one only true Church, namely, that which teaches the Gospel-Law. But because Men are now fallen from this only Truth, and have strayed from this only Way, having abandon'd this only true Church, which Christ establish'd when he was upon Earth; therefore those Wanderers seek to kill me saying, that *I advance Heresies*: As if Christ had been the chief of all Hereticks; and as if they who desire to embrace his Doctrine, again, were Disciples of Errors: Whereas they ought rather to observe, that it is the Christians of this Age who are misled, and that Satan is now enter'd into the Sanctuary in Christ's Place, and makes himself to be worshiped as if he were Christ, while indeed he is Antichrist, directly opposite to the Doctrine of Christ, tho' yet many do follow him, as if he were Christ.

§. 93. And they are his Adherents, who will not hear of the observing of a Gospel-Life; because of the Carnal Softness of their Minds, and their sensual Pleasures, to which they are so habituated, since their Defection, when they abandoned the Light of Truth, to embrace Errors invented by sensual Men. Those Habits, I say, make them afraid to hear any Thing spoken of an Evangelical Life; and they not only despise and reject it, as a Thing impossible to be observed; but moreover they seek to hinder any other from following or striving to follow it; since this would be a tacit Reproof to their Destruction. They seek to kill me, because God has given me his Light of Truth; which I neither can nor will hinder, seeing such is his holy Will, which ought not to depend upon those learned Wits, who will be called Doctors, tho' they

have not as yet learned the first Letter of the Knowledge of themselves ; neither do they know for what End they were created by God ; neither do they enquire about the essential and fundamental Truths of God. It suffices them to know how to get wherewithal to keep a good Table, and to procure the Esteem of Men. Behold the two Pillars upon which their Ecclesiastick State, Virtues and Dignities, are built now-a days.

§. 94. Which would be more tolerable, if at least they would permit others to do their Business, according to the Will of God, and if those Clergy-men, would suffer me peaceably to declare in Writing, the Truths which God communicates to me, without contradicting them. But they, on the contrary, thirst after my Death, because God hath chosen me for an Instrument, and sent me into the World, to declare his Truths to Men ; not by studied Sermons, as those Preachers do, but by Truths so solid, that the Learned themselves, cannot resist them ; for they seek only by fraudulent Arts, to destroy me if they could. As about a Twelve-month ago, they stirred up the Judges of *Hamburg*, to take me up and imprison me ; which they endeavour'd to do, having sent four of their Town Sergeants to my Lodging about Noon, to carry me away as a Criminal, tho' I could never know for what other Reason they did it, but because I am God's Handmaid, declaring his Truths to those, who desire to know them. For I shun Honour from Men, and wherever I am, I live as much unknown and solitary as I can, and seek nothing in this World, but to fulfil the Will of God.

§. 95. But those *Clergy-men* will not suffer me to do this ; but would have me rather, to subject myself to their Errors, and forsake the divine Light. This I will never

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do, whatever they may devise against me ; for I have undertaken, with the Hazard of my Life, to maintain and stand by the Truth which God makes known to me, without regarding their Threatnings and Persecutions. God, who has hitherto kept me out of their Hands, will yet be my Safeguard. And if at last they deprive me of the Life of the Body, yet they shall never be able to take from me the Life of my Soul. Neither can they kill the holy Spirit, as they killed the Body of Christ ; and if they kill my Body, my Blood will water the Plant of the *Gospel-Spirit*, to make it spring up the better : As the Blood of Christ, of his Apostles and holy Martyrs, made the Christian Church to encrease, which Christ had planted in the Ground of this World. So that I am little concern'd whether I live or die. And it is all one to me, whether those Men take away my Life or not ; since to live and die in Christ, is the same Thing.

§. 96. Hence I will not cease, for fear of Death, to declare the Truths of God, seeing I was born for this End ; neither will I forbear to fulfil the Will of God, because of the Threatnings of Men. I must again and again declare it, in all sort of Terms and Reasonings, that every one may know it, and no Body may perish thro' Ignorance. As you, my Friend, cannot perish thro' Ignorance, since I have shewn you so clearly the State of your Soul, and with so many Circumstances, that you cannot doubt of it. But if you maliciously reject these Warnings and Admonitions, you must answer for it ; in the mean Time, you are still free to embrace the Light of Truth, or to remain in your Errors, loving your Darkeness more than the Light. But consider well what this will tend to, and what will be your End, if you abide in the Errors, in which you have lived hitherto. You shall not be of the Number of those,

who shall be enlighten'd to behold the Glory of Christ; but of those, who having loved their Darknes more than the Light, shall abide in eternal Darknes. I do not tell you these Things, my Friend, to compel you to change your Life, for I will compel no Man, and I am not sent to reprove or correct, but to declare the Truths of God, to those who are willing to hear them. And if these Truths offend you, be not angry with me; for I am only God's Messenger, to declare his Will and Purposes concerning Men. For he desires to save them, having created them all for Salvation. Neither can he will, that so much as one Perish; and if Man will not comply with his Purposes, he damns himself, and cannot lay the blame on others, far less on God, who truly damns no Man, but does good always to all Men. But when Man will needs ruin and damn himself, God cannot hinder him, because he created Man altogether free: As I also leave you, my Friend, and all those who shall read this present *Renovation of the Gospel-Spirit*, written for those only, who desire to become true Christians. I shall hereafter, shew the way of doing this most particular, discovering to every one, the Bottom of his Heart, by what Spirit he is guided; and what every one ought to do, that they may subdue their Corruption, and become the true People of God, and Brethren of *Jesus Christ*, and may enter with him into his Glory.

§. 97. But because this will be a large Treatise, I have resolv'd to publish it in three Parts, for Peoples Convenience; finishing this first Part, with this Letter, which entirely discovers the Miseries and Mischiefs, that Sin has brought upon Man, because this is chiefly necessary for the establishing of a *Gospel-Life*. For he who knows not his wretched State, cannot alter it; and will still think

that he is in the Way of Salvation, when he is going on in that of Damnation. And being blinded with this corrupt Imagination, he will be slack in resolving to embrace a Gospel-Life, which is altogether contrary to Flesh and Blood.

§. 98. Hence these new Doctors say, that *it is impossible to keep the Gospel-Law*: Tho', in Truth, it is most easy to him, who has firmly resolv'd to labour to work out his Salvation. All the Difficulty is in the Beginning, whilst corrupt Nature is accustom'd to follow its brutal Inclinations, and therefore it must have a double Bit, to make it turn to the right Hand or the Left, according to the Will of God. It must be manag'd like a young Colt, that is to be trained, who, after he is once well tam'd with the Whip and Spur, does good Service to his Master, and carries him whither he will. Just so is corrupt Nature, which is the brutal Part of Man; it is at first stubborn, and refuses to subject its Will to the divine Will, and labours as much as it can to cast off this Yoke, till Reason, and the firm Resolution of a Man, constrain this brutal Part to yield to God, by the Whip of often repeated Actions, contrary to its Inclinations; and by the Spur of enduring painful and hard Things, whereby at last this rebellious and froward Nature, may be reduced to its Duty; as we read that St. Francis said to his Corruption: *Thou Asst, if thou wilt not obey the Will of God, I will make thee eat hard Straw*. Thus must this Corruption be threatened, when it will rebel against a Gospel-Life; seeing this is good, and pleasant even to Nature itself, when once it is subjected to the Will of God: For then it brings Quiet and Contentment, both to the Body and to the Soul.

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§. 99. Wherefore Christ said, (*Mat. xi.*) *Take my Yoke upon you, for it is easy, and my Burthen is Light.* Now this infallible Truth cannot lie; he spoke the Truth, when he said that *his Yoke is easy*, as I myself experience it. And I find that truly my Soul is more joyful and contented, since I resisted my corrupt Nature, and have subjected it to the Will of God, than formerly, when I flattered my Corruption, and let it follow its Inclinations; which gave me oftentimes, various Grievances and Discontents, while I felt my Mind tossed with various Passions, with diverse Desires, Lusts, Inconstancy, Disquiets and Displeasures. But after that my corrupt Nature was subdued and overcome, it is become pliable and obedient; always in calm and tranquility, never desiring what it has not, but satisfied with what it has.

§. 100. In short this very Nature, which before it was subdued, rose up against me, serves me now for a Footstool, for accomplishing the Will of God: This she assures you of, who still remains,

Your very affectionate in Jesus Christ,

ANTOINETTE BOURIGNON.

The END of the First PART.

LETTER

LETTER VIII. in Mrs. BOURIGNON'S
God's Call and Mens Refusal.

That the Consideration of our being Children of God, must make us despise all that which is in the World, and look upon it with Indifference.

My Father,

I See your Spirit so unsettled, that it is not yet disposed to attend to God. But I will stay it here, and tell you, that God is displeased to see you suffer to be debased, the great Nobleness and Dignity, making you his Son; and it seems that you quit the Rank and Quality, of the Child of such a Father, for to debase yourself in the Earth, and there employ your Senses and Understanding, in Things base, vile, and of nothing, as are all the temporal Things of this World.

O my dear Brother! if you had graved in your Soul, and always in your Memory, that you are the Child of God, without doubt you would renounce, from this Time forth for ever, all the Goods, Delights, and Honours of the Earth, for to aspire to Heaven. For, indeed, what is there worthy of Admiration in the World? There is nothing new in it. It is as it has always been. The Day comes after the Evening, and the Evening after the Day; the Winter after Summer, and the Summer after Winter: And the Creatures, one comes, another goes out: One is rich another is poor; one laughs, another cries; one is born, another dies; and always thus, as it

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has always been. There happens nothing in the World by Chance ; but all that which God has ordain'd. Behold all that which there is rare in the World ; always one same Thing. And nevertheless it is perhaps fifty Years, that you have been employed to consider these ordinary Things, which entertain your Spirit, by Occupations that seem variable. But it is always one same Thing ; and you would be as knowing, at the End of an hundred Years, as at the End of one Year : For one sees nothing but Vanity in this Valley of Miseries. But you must now open the Eyes of the Soul, and die to all that which you see with bodily Eyes ; and then you will know, that God has created you for Things more high, than that which is upon the Earth.

For me, I can indeed protest that there is nothing in the World, capable of making me sad nor joyful, but Sin and Virtue ; and I should never be astonish'd at any Thing, but to see the Blindness of Men. Believe nothing of all this, because that I say it : For all Persons who have the Use of Speech, may indeed say it as much as me : For as much as I need not longer to open the Mouth, for to say these Words, than the others. But remark very nearly in my outward Actions, you will see me always in the same State, if it is not when I meet with vicious or virtuous Persons ; then I perceive myself either more joyful, or more sad : But to go from that, all Things are indifferent to me. Remark also in my Confessions, and my secret and interior Works, you will find therein, a serious Behaviour, which is not agitated, with the Excess of Sadness or of Joy ; and a settled Spirit, which is not started with Astonishment : And this is because that I well know, that all that which passes in the World, is nothing

thing but Vanity : Moreover, unworthy to detain a Soul which is created for Heaven.

For which Cause it is, my Father, it is more than Time to open the Eyes, for to see this Truth, and to know that God has sent you into the World, only for to save your Soul ; and altho' you should gain all the Treasures of Kings, the Honour of all the Monarchs, and the Favour of all the World, all this will serve you for nothing before God ; yea even tho' you should make all the World holy : For there will be nothing but your Works, which will judge you.

For which Cause it is, you must no longer pretend to any Thing in this World, but to aspire after your Country, which is in Heaven : For your Father waits for you, to put you in Possession of the Treasures, which he has acquired for you in this World, with the dolorous Arms of his Passion. But you must use Force ; for the envious Devil will hold you always in Sloth, making you forget the future Good, thro' present Objects ; and thus will lead you at last to Death : And then, in such a State as you shall be, there will you remain.

Think a little, with what Regret.

LETTER XXV. in Mrs. BOURIGNON'S God's Call and Mens Refusal.

That we must not neglect the Time of Salvation.

My Father in Jesus Christ,

IF you had two Souls, I would pray to God that the one might perish, to the End, that you might know, at this dear Cost, the Importance of your Salvation : For

you know not otherways to apprehend it. I have so great Pity to see you thus wandering, without my being able to find the Means, to lead you back into yourself. It seems to me in Spirit, that I see you in the Agony of Death, and that so sorrowful you look upon me, in saying, *O that I have not followed you! why have I not quited all, for to render myself to God? Why have I not imitated you, altho' that I should have died?*

Alas! it seems to me, that you will come to this Extremity, if you do not very soon bring a Remedy. You have yet, the Time and the Opportunity at Hand. But if it once shall escape, it will never return back. For the Love of God, open a little the Eyes of your Spirit, and consider there remains to you yet, so little Time to live in this World. And if you have a Mind to embrace Virtue, you may yet become a great Saint: But if you pass thus negligently your Time, without apprehending that which I have told you, I fear very much your Ruin, which would be more Sorrow to me, than my own Life. However, my Father, retake new Courage; despise the World, and love Penitence; begin to Day; suffer not yourself to be amused longer; for the Devil will always find to employ you, to divert your Resolution: Do by Force, that which you cannot do in Gentleness: Quit rather your Charges, if they withhold you from going perfectly to God; you have nothing but a Soul to save; and altho' all the World shall be holy, all will be lost for you; but if your Soul alone is holy, all will be holy for you.

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